TRAUMA AND THE SOUL

A psycho-spiritual approach to human development and its interruption

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INTRODUCTION

> The search for reason ends at the shore of the known; on the immense expanse beyond it only the sense of the ineffable can glide.
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> We do not leave the shore of the known in search of adventure or suspense or because of the failure of reason to answer our questions. We sail because our mind is like a fantastic seashell, and when applying our ear to its lips we hear a perpetual murmur from the waves beyond the shore.
>
> Citizens of two realms, we all must sustain a dual allegiance...
>
> (Abraham Heschel, 1990: 1–2)

Standing on the deck of our Newfoundland home at sunset on a summer evening, I am suspended between two worlds. Behind me through the screen door I can hear the Canadian television announcer describing the latest suicide bombing in Kandahar Afghanistan—29 dead, 50 wounded, blood and body parts plastered on surrounding walls, the wailing of women, the outrage of men, the vacant despairing eyes of children—unimaginable trauma. I can hardly bear to listen.

Before me to the south lies the wild Atlantic ocean, its undulating swells crashing into the cliffs of Skerwink head, the day-dimmed stars slowly blinking on through a deepening azure sky as the last seabirds make their way across the horizon to offshore islands. The tremulous cry of a loon echoes across the water and over the extraordinary beauty of this gentle scene, a distant foghorn blows its soothing benediction. Held in this beauty, my soul feels at home and I am at peace.

These worlds seem incommensurable and I struggle as I try to hold them together. The first feels "profane," filled with human tragedy and the mind-numbing suffering that comes with mortal, embodied existence in a violent, polarized world. This world presents me with the fragmenting reality of human conflict—destructive rage that I simply cannot metabolize—and in reaction to it I feel myself shutting down, closing up, dissociating, leaving my body: the essence of a traumatic response. The second

world feels sacred, beautiful, boundless, and eternal, opening into an ineffable mystery that soothes the soul—into what Rudolf Otto (1917) called the *numinous* dimension of human experience. And when I open to this larger reality, I can feel the "knitting up of the raveled sleeve of care" (Macbeth, 2.2: 35–39) of my day-world anxieties and troubles; yet there is a haunting loneliness to this beautiful and impersonal world. There are no people in it, except myself.

How do we manage to live a full life between these two worlds? How is it possible to live an en-souled life after the "Kandahars" of our traumatic childhoods? *And how is this possible without using either world as an escape from the other*—without bypassing the realities of human suffering on the one hand or discounting (as mere illusions) the reality of those infinite and ineffable mysteries that the poet Czeslaw Milosz (2004) calls the "Second Space," on the other? In Heschel's language, how do we maintain our "dual allegiance"—how do we honor our citizenship in both realms?

The present work

The title of this book is *Trauma and the Soul* and this title captures the two worlds (and their relationship) that I wish to explore in the following pages. This exploration will take us into some of the mystical or spiritual aspects of my psychotherapeutic work with patients who have suffered from early childhood trauma. As we proceed through the many clinical vignettes and theoretical commentary that follows them, Heschel's reminder that we are "citizens of two realms" and "must sustain a dual allegiance" will be a guiding thread—a binocular metapsychology, within which my otherwise clinical descriptions will be framed and interpreted. I believe that any adequate theoretical understanding of the personal self—and such an understanding is always the implicit foundation of a psychotherapeutic approach—must include its infinite reach and spiritual potential as well as its finite limitations and material determinants.

Many contemporary psychoanalysts are exploring what William James (1936: 370) described long ago as "mystical states of consciousness." Sandor Ferenczi (1988) was a noteworthy pioneer, writing of uncanny healing connections in transference and countertransference with traumatized patients; Wilfred Bion (1965) spoke of the ineffable reality of "O" or the Godhead as the ultimate source of transformation in psychotherapy; Neville Symington (1993) speaks openly about a mysterious "lifegiver" in human experience that participates in an infinite dimension of being, and must be chosen if we are to actualize our own aliveness; Christopher Bollas (1999: 195) acknowledges a "mysterious intelligence that moves through the mind" and says that "if there is a God, this is where it lives." James Grotstein (2000) recently wrote about an "ineffable subject" of the unconscious who sends dreams for the benefit of the "phenomenal subject," i.e., the ego or self. And finally, Michael Eigen (1998: 41–2), an avowed

"psychoanalytic mystic," makes an impassioned appeal for psychoanalytic work to be acknowledged as a religious and "holy" vocation. A review of several of these theorists appears in Chapter 6.

As we will see in the following pages, psychoanalytic work with some victims of early trauma supports these mystical musings in specific and dramatic ways. Almost all the "highly sensitive people" (Aron, 1996) whose cases appear herein have had mystical experiences. Often they have a soulful connection to nature, to animals, and to the mytho-poetic[1] world of film, theater, art, and literature—especially poetry. Sometimes they report having been "saved" by an inner world full of preternatural presences—a world which provided an archetypal container for an innocent soulful part of themselves, now in hiding. Often they report "synchronous" experiences that defy rational understanding. And many of them describe a blurring of the boundaries between ordinary and non-ordinary reality, which allows them uncanny access to an immaterial reality that is inaccessible to better adapted people.

Unfortunately, as the mystical, mytho-poetic life of the trauma survivor unfolds, the benevolent spiritual presences that seem to have saved their souls begin to lose their protective power. Under the pressure of repeated disappointments and disillusionments, these inner objects often turn malevolent. Inner protectors turn into persecutors (see Kalsched, 2006) and the "better angels of our nature" are displaced by the demons of dismemberment, disembodiment, psychic deadening, and primitive defense (see Chapters 3 and 9). This is also a spirituality, but a spirituality of darkness and dread; also a mysticism but one of violence, demonic possession, and loss-of-soul.

Not many writers in the growing field of psychotherapy and spirituality refer to this darker aspect of the spirit world. But the traumatized soul, in its suffering descent between Heaven and Hell in psychotherapy, will sometimes find itself surrounded by powerful dark forces that resist healing, and this is also a spiritual problem. How these resistances are overcome and how the patient/therapist dyad collaborates in the rescue of the soul (and also, ironically, in the redemption of its inner persecutors) will be a major focus of this book. We will see that the spiritual powers that occupy what Jung called the collective layer of the unconscious generally seem to support psychic integration and wholeness, but without adequate human mediation and relatedness they can turn into their opposite, degenerating into life-threatening defenses that undermine the ego's agency. Effective psychotherapy holds out the hope of returning these spiritual powers to their original nature and purpose, i.e., to their proper alignment with what Jung called the central archetype of the *Self*.

James Hillman (1996: 4–5) has wisely observed that people come into psychotherapy not only to relieve their painful symptoms or trace the historical roots of their traumatic woundings, but also to *find an adequate*

biography, by which he means a story that honors the ineffable sources and soulful foundations of their own unique irreplaceable lives.[2] In addition to understanding the source of their injuries and working these through with the therapist, they are looking for a new and larger narrative—the true story of their soul's *dual destiny* on this earth as "citizens of two realms." Ironically, trauma survivors are in a unique position to claim this larger vision, because they are often forced prematurely into "non-ordinary reality"—a spiritual and often mentalized world that helps them survive the unbearable pain of their early affect-relationships. They become what James Grotstein (2000: 238) calls "orphans of the Real," but simultaneously (as illustrated in cases reported in Chapters 1 and 2) they become avatars of the "Ultra-Real."

C.G. Jung realized early on that the magical and mysterious world into which the trauma survivor falls when dissociation cracks open his/her psyche is not only an artifact of the splitting process but is also an archetypal or mytho-poetic world already there to catch them, so to speak. This world of non-ordinary reality surrounds the fractured soul with a dramatic *story* from the archetypal repertoire of the ancient psyche and Jung became fascinated with these stories and their universal features. He came to believe that they provided a matrix of imagery that served as a resource for the soul. Freud was suspicious of this formulation (see Loewald, 1978: 8–9; McGuire, 1974: 429–30) and wanted to reduce mytho-poetic symbols to disguised injuries in human relationships, always translating them back into the pains and struggles of the family drama. Even Ronald Fairbairn (1981), who presciently challenged Freud's instinct theory, claimed that the personified images of dreams were nothing but internalized outer relationships. In these theories the two worlds between which our lives are normally suspended collapse into one.

These essentially reductionist understandings of symbols have followed psychoanalysis down through the decades, even to trauma experts like D.W. Winnicott, who, as we will see in Chapter 7, drew dire diagnostic implications ("childhood schizophrenia!") from Jung's troubled early dreams and fantasies, tracing these to his relationship with a depressed mother. In critiquing Winnicott's (1964b) review of Jung's autobiography, I will argue that Winnicott (and other psychoanalysts as well) fail to understand the crucial role of a *mytho-poetic second world* in saving the trauma survivor's soul from annihilation in the interpersonal world.

Freud and the early psychoanalysts of course were not wrong in emphasizing the primacy of personal *relationships* in a child's life—as against the phantasmagorias of the archetypal or spiritual world—even though these were often life-sustaining for their patients. These early analysts perceived correctly that trauma survivors often overvalue inner reality and become *identified* with the mysteries they find there as a defense against unbearable affects experienced in the interpersonal world. Often they must be "talked down" from their celestial scaffolding (so to speak) and reconnected to life "on the

ground" and in relationship where early relational injuries can eventually be remembered (possibly re-lived on another level) and repaired.

On the other hand, a purely secular (or "relational") psychoanalysis also misses something important, namely that *often the early story of the trauma survivor is a mythological story before it is a personal one*, and must be received as such. As one analyst has recently said, "trauma produces a heightened drama of heroes and victims whose more ordinary human story is waiting to be told" (Trousdale, 2011: 131). Often the trans-personal, sacred story holds the survivor's pain before a human story can be told. This is why the "two worlds" of ordinary and non-ordinary reality—and the imaginal "matrix" in between—are so important for our discussion of trauma and its healing.

Another way to say this, in keeping with recent discoveries in infant observation and neuroscience, is that following dissociation, the fragments of experience (bodily sensations and primal emotional states) are laid down in implicit memory only and are encoded in primitive sub-cortical or limbic areas of the brain. Remaining undifferentiated, they accrue archaic and typical (archetypal) enhancements from the collective layer of the unconscious (as described by Jung) before they can be integrated as personal memories. Larry Hedges (2000) has described the archetypal *memories* that often express the very earliest mother–infant experiences—what he calls the "organizing period" in early development. According to Schore (2003b: 96) and Wilkinson (2006: 147–9) such implicit memories are more likely to become available through the mytho-poetic image-language of dreams, metaphor, poetry, and story than they are as personal recollections (explicit memory). Such mytho-poetic language taps a *daimonic* stratum of the psyche—one typical of those collective patterns that organize the deep layers of the mind. They are impersonal, or rather pre-personal, layers of the body/mind, and they provide a matrix and resource for the traumatized soul in "another world" before it can return to, or enter, "this one."

As illustrated by the case vignettes in this book, trauma survivors often have a deep understanding of a sacred world that sustains them, even in the most depriving and abusive of human environments. This world is not merely a by-product of failed attachment bonds in infancy, nor is it simply a "compensation" for infant–mother neglect or abuse. This world is an everlasting fact of humankind's experience on the planet and the trauma survivor knows this better than most. To acknowledge that *the spiritual world is real, and following trauma it is recruited for defensive purposes*—a position I take throughout this book—differs from saying that the angels and demons that haunt or hallow the imagination of trauma survivors are hallucinations or "nothing but" derivatives—artifacts—of a defensive process. It has been said that there are no atheists in foxholes. There are also few, if any, atheists among trauma survivors—at least not the ones whose experience I report in the following pages.

Two worlds

The whalebone sculpture of a human face shown in Figure I.1 is called "The Storyteller." It was carved by an unknown Inuit artist living on the northwest coast of Alaska. With one eye closed, focused on the inner world of dreams and the mytho-poetic images of the imagination, and one eye open, focused outwardly on the harder edges of material reality, including the realities of human relationship, it gives dramatic expression to the two worlds that I feel must be kept in view if a genuine and compelling human story of trauma is to be told. I will try to tell such an integrated material/spiritual story in the following pages.

We are all accustomed to the familiar world that comes into view through the outward-looking eye of this mask. Visible through this eye is the sensate material world of outer reality—the ordinary temporal world in which we live most of the time with other people, and in which we struggle daily with the demands of life in our fast-paced, outer-directed, consumer-oriented lives. It is also the world of science with its secular/material descriptions of human psychology and its developmental understanding of how we come into being as persons through our earliest relationships. Part of this new story involves attachment theory, contemporary neuroscience, and the realization that early infant–mother interactions actually shape the human brain, leading to powerful new theories of trauma and its treatment (Schore, 1994, 2003b; Siegel, 2007).

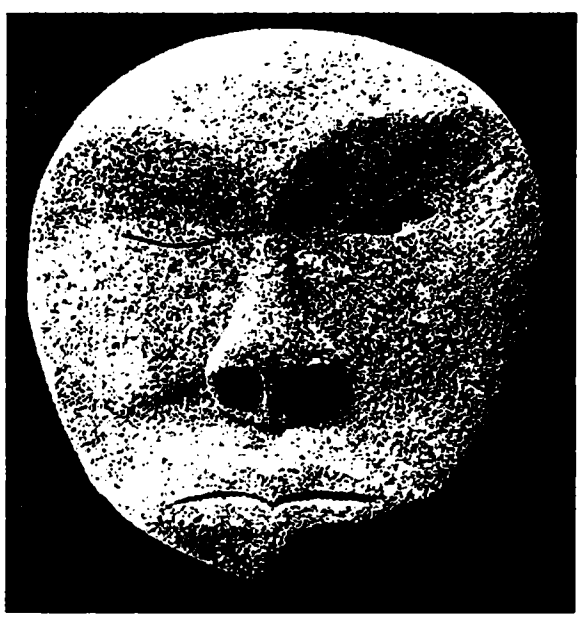

Figure I.1 The Storyteller, Inuit whalebone carving.

To tell the story of trauma through the open eye is to emphasize the foundational importance of the infant–mother relationship in the genesis of the self, and the crucial role of reparative, body-based, emotional experiences in the transference relationship later, if trauma is to be healed. The view through the open eye insists on evidence and is based on clear research in the relational dyad—both infant–mother (Beebe *et al.*, 2000; Tronick, 1989) and patient/therapist (Mitchell, 1988; Bromberg, 1998). It relates the interpersonal facts of our history-in-relationship in their concrete observable detail, but without much attention to the "private self" (Khan, 1974; Modell, 1993) which always involves the *why*, or the deeper *who* of our inner existence.

The world we see through the inward-looking eye is less familiar—invisible to outer-sight and yet no less real—more mysterious perhaps and sometimes, because of this very mystery, uncomfortable for modern men and women. Yet within this interior world the great mystics of every age have found a deeper or larger self that provides a *ground* for external life, enlivening it with a sense of depth and meaning. In his book *The Deeper Life: An Introduction to Christian Mysticism*, Louis Dupré (1981: 24) points to what is revealed by the inner eye of our Storyteller, if we know how to look:

> Mystical consciousness ... assumes ... that underneath the familiar succession of sensations and reflections, a more permanent self rests in which space and time are transformed into vistas of an inner realm with its own rhythms and perspectives. Full self-knowledge must reach to that deeper dimension hidden below the ordinary consciousness with which we work, talk, and study.
>
> ...For the Christian it is the point where God and the soul touch, the divine basis on which human selfhood rests. It is what Tauler called "the ground of the soul" and Eckhart "the little castle." Catherine of Siena speaks of the "interior home of the heart," ... and John of the Cross of the "house at rest ... in darkness and concealment." All these metaphors suggest a secret dwelling where God resides, the center of my created being which remains permanently united with God's creative act ... the sanctuary without images, as Plotinus called it.

Jung's word for this "ground of the soul" was the *Self*, which I will capitalize throughout the book. The ego's experience of the Self is a spiritual event and no-one who has had this experience ever forgets it. Remarkable examples of such ego/Self encounters are given in Chapters 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9.

The idea of a second, spiritual world lying alongside our ordinary material reality is not widely accepted in scientific circles, and yet it is as old as the human race. Primal peoples all over the world have experienced

the sporadic intrusion of higher spiritual powers in their lives, often manifested in unusual events or dreams (see Bernstein, 2005; DeLoria, 2006). Certain individuals in these early traditional cultures[3] experienced a visionary "call" or initiation into the mysteries of the spirit world and returned with special wisdom and healing powers to become shamans for their culture. The existence of two worlds was never in question for such aboriginal people, and the shaman was perhaps the most important figure in tribal life precisely because he or she could (as the initiated one) negotiate "between the worlds." It has even been suggested (Jensen, 1963: 228–9, 284–5) that it is to the early shaman's experience of ecstasy that we should look for the origin of the idea that man is a duality of body and spirit.

So through the inward-looking eye of our Inuit sculpture we encounter the ineffable—the mysteries of soul and spirit, intimations of the infinite and the eternal. *This world is often potentiated by early trauma and so a complete story of trauma must include its perspective.* Such a "binocular" view is important, I believe, lest the inner world opened up for us by C.G. Jung and others be neglected and forgotten. The field that surrounds us in the new "trauma paradigm" of psychoanalysis is increasingly a view through the open eye of our Inuit mask. This view is more and more "relational" and inter-personal, more and more informed by the findings of infant–mother attachment studies, more and more interested in the early-forming infant brain, and especially in mind–brain–body integration. These developments are essential to our work remaining relevant and grounded. In fact, they even hold out the possibility of restoring the embodied soul to our field, which historically has been preoccupied with disembodied insight and excessively left-brain dominated "interpretations." Jungian analysis has been especially guilty of this ascent into mentalization and the pursuit of intellectual meaning. Among other things, the new neuroscience studies (see Schore, 2011) restore the centrality of *affect* to our understanding of what really makes for change in psychotherapy—something that takes us back to the early clinical studies of Jung himself, where the role of affect in complex formation was central (see Jung, 1907: para. 78).

But—and this is my point—if neuroscience is to realize these possibilities of helping to ground our field and make it relevant to the treatment of trauma, it will have to open to the fact that *for every self–other relational moment in psychotherapy, there is also an inner event* and I don't mean an inner event in the wiring or sculpting of the brain. I mean an inner event in the sculpting of the soul—in what Jungians often call the ego–Self relationship or the ego–Self *axis* (see Edinger, 1972: 1–62). And one way we know that the ego–Self axis is implicated in our relational interventions is that dreams tell us so. In the pages that follow I will tell many stories about such moments and describe the dreams that follow them. These dreams tell us what is going on in an intermediate space *within* the personality.

This space is "transitional," but not between self and other. Rather, this space is transitional between what James Grotstein (2000) calls the "ineffable subject of the unconscious" and the "phenomenal subject of consciousness." In Jung's language this is the space or axis between the ego and the Self.

One reason that our binocular vision is important is that it unites the two worlds of inner and outer reality in a living third thing. Whether we describe this intermediate reality as the "analytic third" (Ogden, 1994: 61–95) or the paradoxical "potential space" where we are most alive (Winnicott, 1971: 104–10), or as the "transcendent function" (Jung, 1916)—the space between our *private subjectivity* and our *inter-subjectivity* is crucial for understanding the human condition and also for healing the places where we have found it intolerable and escaped into one world or the other. An "adequate biography" of any individual will prove to be a weaving together of both these worlds—always a combination of (inner) imagination and (outer) reality, part imagination and part fact. In this way our lives become arenas in which "different orders of being intersect with us and we with them" (Romanyshyn, 2002: 105). If we are going to "individuate" in the true meaning Jung gave to that term, then we must let ourselves grow from these two roots.

Survivors of early trauma often report that an essential part of themselves has retreated into a spiritual world and found refuge and support there in the absence of such support by any human person. We will witness some moving examples of this throughout the book, especially as the inner world of dreams opens up in response to affectively charged moments in the therapy relationship. Sometimes this spiritual world gives the trauma survivor privileged access to immaterial realities that remain inaccessible to people who live mostly in one world. Many of these patients have special gifts, psychic powers, shamanic visions, or auditory messages from beyond the ego, mystical connections to animals or to nature, access to healing capacities, uncanny intuitive wisdom, artistic talent, etc.[4] On the other hand, sometimes the spiritual world also *torments* the trauma survivor in ways that better-adapted people never have to worry about.

C.G. Jung was such a person. As we will see in Chapter 7, Jung struggled his whole life, divided between these two worlds. Suffering significant early trauma in his childhood (revived again after his break from Freud in 1911), Jung found refuge in the inner world with all its beauties and terrors, but at a great cost to his outer relationships and to his reputation among psychoanalytic colleagues. Near the end of his long and fruitful life, Jung found his way back to full embodiment and relatedness, while retaining the extraordinary wisdom he had discovered in what he called the world of his "No. 2 personality." As in our Inuit mask, the two worlds were finally united in the one person who was C.G. Jung. It is a remarkable story, and one we will relate at some length in Chapter 7 and in other vignettes throughout the book. In doing so we will try to show how Jung's

story and life—intelligible only through an appreciation of the two worlds—has been seriously misunderstood by psychoanalysts, even by someone who understood trauma and the "potential space" of creative living as deeply as D.W. Winnicott.

It is noteworthy that in his professional writing as a psychologist, Jung hesitated to make any statements about the ontological status of what he called "God's world," preferring to remain consistently phenomenological, i.e., limiting himself to what he and others *experienced subjectively.* Epistemologically, he was cautious. In the following pages I will follow his example in this regard. When I speak of the soul in these pages, I will be referring to a vital animating core of our embodied selves—a certain essential *something* that links us (through love) to the divine, to each other, and to the exquisite beauties of the natural and cultural world. We know the soul when we experience it.

But while the soul remains a subjective experience, renewed every day in our relationships with people and things and with the ineffable, it remains a complete mystery no matter what I may say about it in these pages. As the core of our subjectivity it is impossible to define objectively. Preferring to live "between the worlds," the soul, like quicksilver, slips away as soon as we try to grasp it with language. Similarly, when I speak of a spiritual world full of "supernatural" powers that seem to be intimately related to the soul's life, strengthening it on the one hand, or weakening it on the other, I will be speaking of highly subjective realities that appear mostly in dreams or as outpicturings of deeply felt irrational affects within the imaginal realm. The case studies in this book demonstrate many of these subjective realities as the symbolic expressions of the mytho-poetic psyche—collective representations, "archetypal images." They are powerfully real. But we will stop short of claiming ontological status for these evanescent forms or presences, allowing them their "intermediate" life between the worlds.

Jung himself struggled with this question of what kind of *reality* spiritual experiences occupy. He was impressed that we often experience spiritual powers as a *mysterium tremendum,* inspiring awe and worship of *something beyond the ego.* To honor this otherness theoretically, Jung located such experience not in the personal unconscious but in a deeper stratum of the psyche (collective unconscious) and he never tired of pointing out that the spiritual realities of myth and religion were *where the psyche "was" before psychology made it an object of scientific investigation.*

Trauma and the self-care system

Early relational trauma results from the fact that we are often given more to experience in this life than we can bear to experience *consciously.* This problem has been around since the beginning of time, but it is especially acute in early childhood where, because of the immaturity of the psyche and/or brain, we are ill-equipped to metabolize our experience. An infant

or young child who is abused, violated or seriously neglected by a caretaking adult is overwhelmed by intolerable affects that are impossible for it to metabolize, much less understand or even think about. A shock to the psychosomatic unity of the personality threatens to shatter the child to its very core—threatens to extinguish that "vital spark" of the person so crucial for the experience of aliveness and so central to the later experience of "feeling real." Such a shattering of the childhood psyche would be an unimaginable catastrophe—"soul murder" as one investigator called it (Shengold, 1989).

Fortunately this shattering almost never happens, at least not completely. Instead, a life-saving split occurs that we call *dissociation.* Dissociation seals over non-being. It prevents annihilation of the unit self, substituting multiplicity and an archetypal story that implicitly holds the parts together. The unbearable affect is distributed to different parts of the psyche/soma. These parts cease to know about each other so that the personality does not have to suffer the unspeakable horror of trauma *as a whole.* We could say that the psyche shatters itself along inborn "fault" lines (Balint, 1979) and that discontinuities or gaps open up in our experience. These self-divisions have survival value because they save a part of the child's innocence and aliveness by splitting it off from the rest of the personality, preserving it in the unconscious for possible future growth and surrounding it with an implicit narrative that is eventually made explicit in dreams. This allows life to go on, albeit at a terrible price—i.e., loss of the animation and vitality that have always been associated with ensouled living. So, ironically, dissociative defenses save a vital core of the self while simultaneously losing it (or losing it partially). They preserve the seed by cutting it off from life in this world ... at least for a time. We will see both literary and clinical examples of this in Chapters 3, 7, and 9.

Evidence for this kind of inner division in the traumatized psyche of a child is well established by object-relations theory. Sandor Ferenczi (1933) described such a split in his patients between a "regressed self" on the one hand, retreating into the unconscious mind, and a "progressed self" that grew up too fast and protected the regressed self. Winnicott (1960a) differentiated between a "true self" and a "false" or "caretaker" self designed to protect it, and further demonstrated that the caretaker self usually became identified with the mind, leaving the true self languishing in the body, causing psychosomatic illness. Fairbairn (1981) derived his understanding of the inner world from the simultaneous internalization of the infant self and its neglectful caretakers, transposed into the inner world as a victim and perpetrator complex (libidinal ego attacked by an internal saboteur). Finally, Guntrip (1969) described how the innocent child, growing up in a neglectful or abusive environment, begins to hate his own immaturity (identifying with the "bad" parent) until a split occurs between a "lost heart of the self" disappearing into the unconscious, tormented by an "antilibidinal ego."

All these investigators concluded that traumatic dissociation in the child leaves an inner world divided between regressed and progressed inner objects. Usually the regressed part of the personality is represented as a child or infant, often locked away in an "inner cocoon" (Modell, 1984), an "imprisoning sanctuary" (Eigen, 1995) or a "psychic retreat" (Steiner, 1993), whereas the progressed part might appear as a sadistic tyrannical figure, attacking or imprisoning the child (Fairbairn, 1981) or as a "false god," part of the narcissistic defensive system (Symington, 2001).

In my early work as an analyst, I began to find this same pattern in the dream material of my patients—the same "story," but sometimes with a striking difference. In certain patients' dreams, the image of the regressed part of the personality would appear not just as a child, but as an extraordinary child, one that appeared to be supremely wise, or "divine" in some way, perhaps surrounded by an unearthly light or speaking in parables or showing miraculous physical powers.[5] Sometimes the regressed self would be a magical animal—a talking bird, a dolphin, or a pony, representing a kind of soul-animal for the patient. On the other hand, the progressed self might also become mythologized, appearing as a frightening vampire, a sadistic demon who tortured the patient from within. Sometimes this diabolical figure would morph into its opposite, becoming a guardian angel who protected the inner child.

The mytho-poetic powers in the self-care system are well represented in the illustration in Plate I, showing Blake's "good and evil angels" struggling over a terrified child. The evil angel is shackled in his flaming darkness and his unseeing eyes represent the deadening trance of traumatic dissociation. The good angel seems to have wrested the child from him or is at least preventing him from reaching the child. Both of these angels represent the protective and/or persecutory side of a defensive system in *daimonic*[6] form. They pull the child between two archetypal antinomies—the tortures of Hell or the bliss and oblivion of Heaven.

I began to realize that I was observing an archaic and typical (archetypal) dyadic structure in my patients' dream material that was devoted to *defense*, very similar to both the object-relations findings and collective imagery such as Blake's image above. I referred to this typical dyadic structure as the "self-care system" and, 15 years ago, wrote a book about my discoveries (Kalsched, 1996). Reported in that book is my further discovery that this "system" often made its appearance in dreams at critical moments in the psychotherapy process when new life of some kind was emerging for the patient—often in relation to myself in the transference. These moments of emergent hope and potential transformation seemed to trigger the defensive activity of diabolical inner figures who then attacked the patient's vulnerable self in nightmarish dreams, rendering the inner world as traumatized as the outer one. While seemingly designed to isolate and protect a vulnerable core of the personality, the

sadistic powers in this system began to attack the very animated foundations of personality that they were originally designed to protect, just like autoimmune disease attacks the body's healthy tissue. It was as though a bargain that was struck to save the vulnerable soul-child turned out to be a Faustian bargain with a persecutory Devil who kept the soul disembodied and unrealized.

In the clinical experience that formed the basis for *The Inner World of Trauma* I was so impressed by the tyrannical *negative* forces in this system and the daimonic power of these forces to undermine hope and drive patients into the repetition compulsion (Freud, 1926) that I suggested that the self-care system was mostly *uneducable*. I no longer have such a pessimistic view. Further clinical experience and an acquaintance with current applications of attachment theory (Wallin, 2007; Knox, 2003), affective neuroscience (Schore, 2003b; Wilkinson, 2005; Badenoch, 2008), body-centered psychotherapy (Ogden *et al.*, 2006; Stanley, 2010), the relational school in New York (Bromberg, 1998, 2008), and recent experience with the model and methods of intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy (ISTDP) as practiced by Patricia Coughlin Della Selva (1996) have all combined to re-inform my own technique and make the psychotherapeutic work I do with trauma survivors more effective, affect-centered, embodied, and relational. As a result, I have been able to witness how the seemingly intractable resistances of the self-care system can transform, and the defensive system can even release its prisoners, i.e., its inner "children."

Because psychotherapy is an attachment relationship, many of the injuries in our patients' early relational lives can be re-experienced toward a different outcome. Owing to the brain's plasticity, the rigid neural nets that are wired into defensive patterns can be re-configured and repaired. Psychoanalysts (including myself) have begun to realize that *what has been broken relationally must be repaired relationally*. This calls for *affectively focused treatment*—what Schore (2003b: 49) calls right-brain-to-right-brain communication. The analyst "tunes in" on an affect level to those dissociative "gaps" or places of derailment where the intimate feeling-connection with the patient threatens to come apart. As Bromberg (2006: 181–2) demonstrates, the analyst must become a full partner in the "dyadic regulation" of affect and co-creation of an entirely new inter-subjective reality. Fortunately, in this process, what the analyst says or does will be less important than "how openly what does happen is processed with the analysand" (Mitchell, 1988: x).

In the present book the reader will see several vivid examples of the way the rigidities of the self-care system are slowly transformed through the relational struggles of analytic psychotherapy. This transformation is illustrated in extended cases presented in Chapters 4, 7, and 9, where the reader will observe the operation of this system over time, how it manifests in transference, and the slow transformation of its daimonic inner

presences from malevolent to more benevolent forces. In each case we witness how an archetypal story, whose original "purpose" is to save the soul by splitting it off from the body, slowly (and with great resistance) becomes a more feeling and personal story, permitting the soul its unique incarnation in individual personhood.

Considering the soul

Having established to my satisfaction that the inner world of severe trauma was one primarily dedicated to defense, the question then became "what was the system defending?" Here, again, I began to be convinced that the self-care system was defending something more than what the object-relations analysts called the "regressed self" or the "libidinal ego." I had no quarrel with that formulation as far as it went. But it seemed that something *sacred* was being preserved by the self-care system—some basically innocent or pre-traumatic part of the essential god-given self—perhaps an infant-part of the self that was being protected from further suffering and possibly preserved for further growth. Accordingly, I designated this regressed part the "imperishable personal spirit" and recorded its frequent appearance in dream material as a beleaguered, sometimes lost, often miraculous "child." Chapters 1–4 record several vivid examples of encounters with this "child" in the course of more recent work with individual patients.

Now, 15 years later, I am just as fascinated and mystified as I was then by this seemingly essential and sacred core of the personality that continually appears in the dream material. In the current book I refer to this mystery as the *soul*, instead of the "imperishable personal spirit." Whatever we call this vital spark I take some comfort in the fact that many psychoanalysts have found themselves preoccupied with a sacred "something" at the core of our potential wholeness as human beings.

Winnicott (1963: 187), for example, referred to a "sacred incommunicado center" of the personality otherwise known as the "true self," which he says, cannot be defined, except to say that it "collects together the details of the experience of aliveness (p. 148). Fairbairn (1981: 217) referred to a similar inner object as the "libidinal ego," and Guntrip (1969: 72–3), in a more poetic metaphor, as the "lost heart of the self." Later, many other practitioners weighed in on this theme: T.H. Almas (1998: 76) refers to an ontological presence in the personality described simply as "essence." Neville Symington (1993: 35), whose work I refer to frequently in the pages that follow, called this inner object the "lifegiver." James Grotstein (2000: 165) refers to a "hostage self" that frequently appears in abused or traumatized patients as an "undead child" haunting them from within. He also speaks of his encounter with a core of "innocence" in certain patients and once remarked that "*innocence is the crucial element in a person's spiritual nature*" (Grotstein, 1984: 213.)

Finally C.G. Jung (1912b) discovered how important it was to support his patient's therapeutic regressions back to early childhood in order to make contact with a core of the self that was hidden in the unconscious. This "lost heart of the self," Jung discovered, often had an aura of numinosity around it which was a marker of its roots in the collective unconscious and its "spiritual" qualities:

> As against this idea [that regression is pathological], therapy must support the regression, and continue to do so until the "prenatal" stage is reached. It must be remembered that the "mother" is really an imago, a psychic image merely [not just the personal mother] .... Hence the regression leads back only apparently to the mother; ... but goes back beyond her to the prenatal realm of the "Eternal Feminine," to the immemorial world of archetypal possibilities where, "thronged round with images of all creation," slumbers the "divine child," patiently awaiting his conscious realization. This son is the germ of wholeness, and he is characterized as such by his specific symbols.
>
> In the darkness of the unconscious a treasure lies hidden, the same "treasure hard to attain" which ... is described as the shining pearl, or, to quote Paracelsus, as the "mystery," by which is meant a *fascinosum* par excellence. It is these inherent possibilities of "spiritual" or "symbolic" life and of progress which form the ultimate, though unconscious goal of regression.
>
> (Jung, 1912b: paras. 508–10)

This discovery was perhaps the main epiphany of Jung's personal and professional life—the central conviction of his entire authorship, namely, that there is a sacred dimension to human life which is also discernable in the psyche's symbolic process—if we learn how to attend to it in our dreams, and how to understand it. And this sacred dimension often comes to presence during the suffering of the individuation process in the image of the *child* ... a part-divine innocent child whose life is a preoccupation of mythology the world over. The human/divine child, in other words, does not belong entirely to "this world." And neither do we.

The image of this "child" is featured in Chapter 2 of the present volume, but also serves as the major player in two later chapters, where I explore the concept of *innocence* in human development and in psychotherapy. Trauma is about a crushing blow to the generative innocence at the core of the self, and trauma survivors often feel that they have lost their innocence forever—until they find it visiting them in dreams as a child or soul-animal "from another world." In Chapter 7 we explore this theme of the loss and recovery of innocence in light of a clinical case on the one hand, and St. Exupéry's (2000) *The Little Prince* on the other. Chapter 8 continues the same theme in the life of C.G. Jung himself, as he

shuttles back and forth between the two worlds of his childhood, i.e., his No. 1 and No. 2 personalities. In this struggle we witness Jung trying desperately and successfully to preserve a sacred "secret"—an innocent true self, at the very core of his life—and to protect it from further violation by the "spirit of the times" (Jung, 2009). He came to understand that this eternal child was his very soul, and Jung realized that his soul could be lost for a while, then found again.

The soul's development

An important aspect of the traditional idea of the human soul that recommends it for our use in this book is the fact that traditionally the soul is always a creature of both worlds—divine and human, time-bound and eternal, mortal and immortal. Straddling these two worlds, the soul is the seat of our dual destiny and home to what Shakespeare called our "immortal longings." It is also home to what Jung called our "religious instinct" (Jung, 1959b: para. 653).

Moreover, the soul is understood to *develop* from its original oneness with the divine, to an evolving condition of "two-ness" as it gathers worldly experience and ultimately to "threeness" as it re-relates (re-links as in *religeo* or religion) again to its spiritual origins. Many years ago, in a letter to his brother George, John Keats (1891: 255–6) described the soul's evolution as follows:

> Call the world if you Please "The Vale of Soul-making." Then you will find out the use of the world.... I say "Soul making" Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence – There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions – but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. Intelligences are atoms of perception – they know and they see and they are pure, in short they are God – How then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given to them – so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each ones individual existence? How, but by the medium of a world like this?... Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways!... As various as the Lives of Men are – so various become their souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls,... of the sparks of his own essence. This appears to me a faint sketch of a system of Salvation which does not affront our reason and humanity.

In Keats' view the innocent soul, a divine substance or spark, is shaped by suffering as it confronts the pains and troubles of this world. Considered from this point of view, we all start off as a human/divine unity—a *oneness,*

but the process of our separate human development means the descent or emptying out of our "divinity" (*kenosis*) into human particularity and limitation. It represents a fall away from that primordial sense of oneness in the Garden, into two-ness. In developing a self we inevitably become self-centered and self-conscious. We leave the garden of our innocence and now, knowing good and evil, live in exile—"East of Eden," conscious but alienated.

Such alienation from our essential nature seems to be the necessary and inevitable price paid for becoming conscious, and yet there remains within us a part of the original oneness that longs to return to that great spiritual reality from which we came and about which we have forgotten.[7] This splinter of the divine radiance we call the soul. The soul's memory of its origins are celebrated in many religious and mythological stories all over the world, and also in the dreams of contemporary individuals. One of the most beautiful cultural versions is an Iranian Gnostic story, *The Hymn of the Pearl*, found in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostle Thomas (Jonas, 1963: 112ff.) where the protagonist leaves his Heavenly home, falls into "Egypt" (this world), has amnesia for his heavenly mission, and must be awakened to his divine origin and destiny by a letter from his father. He has forgotten who he really is, until this calling from another world.

A similar process can happen in depth psychotherapy for the survivors of early trauma. In psychoanalysis people go over and over their stories in order to integrate the multiple parts of themselves from the past—all the while searching for a new unifying pattern, a new center that may change their perspective on themselves. They are waiting for that letter—that recollection that takes them beyond all the personal memories into a deeper ground that makes sense of their lives when nothing else ever has. Sometimes the "letter" comes in dreams. We will see dramatic examples in Chapters 4, 7, and 9.

If we put all this in the psychoanalytic language of developmental object-relations and attachment theory, we would say that in the optimal process of this descent into time-and-space reality, the innocent soul, reaching out for experience, is met by a reasonably empathic environment, and the soul takes up residence in the body (secure attachment). Winnicott described the process as the "indwelling" of the psyche in the soma—a mystery that happens as the mother "introduces and re-introduces the baby's mind and body to each other" (Winnicott, 1970: 271).

The result is that the child makes a *mediated* descent from omnipotence to the reality principle, from innocence to experience. This is always a disillusioning process (see Kohut, 1971) but "good enough" mothering means it does not happen too fast and that there is a "payoff" in psychic structure or growing ego-strength for each loss of omnipotence and grandiosity. Along with psychosomatic indwelling, the other payoff in this optimal process is what Winnicott (1964a: 112) calls "personalization" by

which he simply means becoming a self as a coherent unit or whole person. A whole person is a psycho-somatic unity who embodies a vital spark at the center of its integrated body/mind being. Chapter 5 addresses this issue of psycho-somatic wholeness—how the defensive system compromises it, and how depth psychotherapy holds the promise of restoring it.

The reader will note that there is something mysterious—even spiritual—in Winnicott's concepts of personalization and indwelling. Winnicott does not say precisely *what* it is that descends into the soma through the mother's mediation. Sometimes he calls it the "mind," sometimes the "psyche." At one point he suggests tentatively that it might be thought of as "the self which is not the ego [but] is the person who is me, who is only me, who has a totality ... and finds itself naturally placed in the body, but may ... become dissociated from the body" (1970: 271). At another place (1969b: 565) he says:

> It is not clear what to call that part of the personality which in health becomes closely bound up with the body and its functions, but which needs to be considered separately. One can use the word "psyche," but this may suggest to the reader something that is connected with the spirit and even with spiritualism.

In the various chapters of this book we will take one small step beyond Winnicott here and unapologetically use the word *soul* to stand for that part of the personality "which in health becomes closely bound up with the body." It will not disturb us if we find this part to be intimately "connected with the spirit and even with spiritualism."

Since the publication of *The Inner World of Trauma: Archetypal Defenses of the Personal Spirit* (Kalsched, 1996), my attention has been drawn more and more to the salient moments in the work that seem to be most significant for change and healing. Surprisingly, these moments often seem to have a spiritual aspect as well as a relational one. Within the psychotherapeutic dialogue there are moments in which a soul-full mystery at the center of personality is glimpsed or shared by both participants. Often these moments are occasioned by intense suffering, where the patient finds the courage to bear some of the pain of his or her traumatic past—perhaps witnessed for the first time (see Chapter 1). In so doing, he or she breaks through to a wider perspective (wholeness) and a place of self-acceptance, beyond blame or victimization. Or perhaps therapist and patient together have weathered an emotional storm and found their way through a frightening conflict to a place of calm and understanding where love flows once again. Often, such moments arise when we are moved by a deeper meaning or larger perspective than the ego's usual orientation. Perhaps the uncanny wisdom of a dream emerges into consciousness between the therapeutic partners, filling them with a sense of appreciation for the psyche's deep intelligence and beauty (see Chapter 7). Or perhaps a

"synchronous" event occurs, filling both analytic partners with a mysterious sense of the hidden spiritual/material connections that transcend the otherwise clear boundaries between self and other.

Whatever its form, such moments are universally healing and transformative. They lead to the strengthening and personalization of the soul—its "indwelling" in the body. The indwelling soul confers a feeling of being real—a sense that we have a God-given right to be here. At its best, then, psychotherapy is partly a spiritual discipline helping both parties participate in this world as a potential space in which both material and spiritual energies support each other toward the goal of what Jung called individuation—realizing your destiny, becoming who you really are, becoming an ensouled person.

The interruption of trauma

The subtitle of this book is "A psycho-spiritual approach to human development and its interruption." Trauma constitutes an interruption of the normal processes through which an embodied, true self comes into being. The early trauma we are focusing on in this book is *relational trauma* because it occurs in the earliest attachment relationship between the infant and his or her mother. When things are bad enough in this primal relationship, the infant dissociates and this effectively interrupts the normal process through which the infant is coming-into-being in dialogue with reality's otherness.

Another way to say this is that trauma forecloses transitional space, which is the intermediate space through which the infant is working out a relationship between the inner and outer world, between affect and thought, between the right and left hemisphere (Schore, 1994; McGilchrist, 2009), between the body and the mind (see Chapter 5). Winnicott (1971: 11–15) says that the hungry baby hallucinates the breast (inner world) and that the mother, in her empathy, puts her breast in the place of the hallucination (outer world). At this moment the baby has an experience of *creating the world* (from inside) and *discovering the world* (out there) at the same time.

James Grotstein (2000: 49) suggests that *trauma is about encountering the world before the baby has had a chance to create it.* In other words, the infant's psychic pain is unbearable and defenses become necessary for survival. The slowly indwelling soul can no longer afford to risk its descent into the body through transitional space. Indwelling ends. Personalization ends, leading to de-personalization. The unfolding process of the soul's incarnation is temporarily suspended, and a second world is pressed into service to provide a mytho-poetic matrix for the soul. But the relationship to the outer world is compromised. The trauma survivor will often describe this experience as being "broken" or as "losing my innocence forever" (see the case of Jennifer in Chapter 1).

When the personality is forced to dis-integrate in this way, it is hard on the soul. The soul cannot thrive and grow in the fragmented personality. Its preferred medium is the psycho-somatic integrate, where all the capacities of the self are represented as parts of a whole. With the psyche fragmented, the soul cannot indwell in the body—it cannot set up residence as a divine/human principle of inner sustainment. Perhaps it visits occasionally as an unbidden guest, but with only this flickering ghost-like presence of the soul, the person's sense of animation and aliveness is mostly gone. This is because the soul *is* by definition, this very animation and aliveness—the center of our God-given spirit—the vital spark in us that "wants" to incarnate in the empirical personality but needs help from supportive persons in the environment to do so—help that is often not available.

Without this help the psyche provides a partial cure of trauma so that life can go on, but there is a great price for this self-cure—loss of soul. Through dreams we can see how the innocence-identified soul has been sacrificed and given up to another world and we can see the spiritual powers that both protect and persecute it there. In Chapter 1 we explore some of the age-old mythic stories that embody this theme, featuring an "exposed" and vulnerable child and the "powers" that protect or persecute this child. Considered psychologically, these light and dark powers *represent the ambivalence of the defensive system about the process of indwelling*. Having experienced the unbearable pain of trauma, the intelligence that seems to inform the defensive system wants to avoid the suffering necessary to come into being—necessary for innocence to gain experience (see Chapters 7 and 8). Accordingly, this intelligence recommends a more mental form of chronic and repetitive suffering over the acute suffering in-the-body required for personal development.

Known in the literature as "neurotic" vs. "authentic" suffering, we will see these two forms of suffering illustrated in Chapter 3, where Dante and Virgil descend into Dante's own personal version of Hell to confront the dark Lord of Dissociation otherwise known in Latin as "Dis." Having found the courage (and the affect-tolerance) to remember his dissociated pain, Dante finally finds his way out of his depression and into a more creative and conscious form of suffering that leads (through Purgatory) to indwelling, and ultimately to the renewal of his life. But not before he has faced the pain he does and doesn't want to face.

Throughout the cases in this book, we will find again and again that it is *relationship* that heals trauma. But not just any relationship. The kind of relationship that makes a difference is the kind of transformative relationship actualized in the best contemporary psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Such a relationship will have one eye open, looking outward, and one eye closed, looking inward. Such a relationship will re-open both inter-subjective and mytho-poetic space. It will "awaken the dreamer" in the patient (Bromberg, 2006), inviting both partners in the psychoanalytic

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dyad to "stand in the spaces" (Bromberg, 1998) of dissociated self-states, reflecting on the stormy affects that are generated as the soul re-enters the body, until reconnections are made between affects and images, between the present and the past, between the inner child and its caretakers in the self-care system. Such a relationship holds the hope that both inner and outer transitional space may open once again, that connections in the brain can be slowly re-wired, and that archetypal defenses will release us into human inter-subjectivity and ensouled living.

Concluding thoughts

In my earlier book, I acknowledged that trauma was often a spiritual crisis requiring the intervention of powerful archetypal forces from the unconscious, and described these powers functioning as a "self-care system." Although I presented my findings as tentative and provisional, the ideas presented in *The Inner World of Trauma* apparently struck a chord with analytic practitioners and proved to be a useful map for what they encountered clinically (Bernstein, 2005; Sinason and Cone-Farran, 2007; Wilkinson, 2006). Other colleagues questioned my formulations, finding their implications at variance with Jung's classical position on the integrative *telos* of the individuating self (Marlan, 2005) or raising questions about whether archetypal defenses are best thought of as "innate" or, preferably, "emergent" (Knox, 2003: 129–32). Whatever the case, my dialogue with these writers has been invaluable in the process of clarifying my ideas.

Even more rewarding, from a personal point of view, have been the many e-mails and letters I have received from trauma survivors around the world who happened upon my earlier book and found therein a sympathetic and useful understanding of their own self-experience. Many of these letters highlighted a spiritual aspect of the book—aspects I had not intended to emphasize. One woman, for example, struggling with depression, wrote: "When I read your book, the stranger within me came to the window and cried." This woman seemed to be saying that some passages in the book had moved her and mirrored her soul—a fugitive part of herself that had become a "stranger"—but that now could return from its place of exile to the threshold between inner and outer world (the window). This, in turn, enabled her to feel her deep and heretofore unreachable sadness, and this was the first step toward healing her depression—toward making her whole again.

This is the way it is with the human soul. It seems to need a resonant image from the human or non-human environment (Searles, 1960) if it is to come forward, something it *recognizes*. We can imagine that the infant responds to this resonant image repeatedly, in the deep embodied holding by its mother, and in the equally soulful eye contact and gaze that is a part of their mutual play and loving connection. These moments, which we now realize are so critical to later "secure attachment" (Bowlby, 1969) and

even to the healthy formation of the brain (Schore, 1994, 2003a), are the first quickening of the soul, the earliest beginning of its "indwelling" as Winnicott would say. Later, other resonant images will quicken the soul through intimate contact with others in the interpersonal world of the child.

Still later, and in other settings, this resonance will come from sources beyond the interpersonal—the beauties of nature, the awesome realities of the cosmos, the soulful eyes of an animal, inspiring music, elevating ideas—even psychological descriptions in a book! Therapy for the soul comes in many forms and from many places, not just in the mother–infant dyad or in its later re-creation in the consulting room of a psychotherapist.

But for those of us who work in those consulting rooms, day in and day out, having a theory that honors the reality of the soul and the depth of the spirit becomes important. This theory can never be systematic or scientific because the soul and spirit are mercurial realities, quixotic, ineffable, and can never be pinned down. As the seat of our subjectivity, the soul can never be an *object* of investigation and scientific discourse. Like light itself, it lives "between the worlds"—now particle, now wave—always evanescent, just out of reach, leading us both out into the world and back into the depth of ourselves. If we were wise we would probably keep silent about the soul and learn to listen. But this is impossible. We are compelled to talk about it, and so we will.

So, in the following pages I will tell *stories* about encounters with the soul or spirit. These stories are anecdotal and not amenable to statistical analysis. Yet they are factual. They are empirical realities, and so I believe they have a claim on scientific truth. They actually happened, and sometimes they are the most important things that happened in a person's life or in the course of psychoanalytic treatment. They are also the most interesting stories on the planet—at least to this investigator—so how could we not tell them? Perhaps their telling in the pages of this book will allow the "stranger" within some readers to "come to the window" in recognition of that evanescent shimmering reality presenting itself at every interface "between the worlds." We call this reality the human soul. It participates in both eternity and time, and so do we.

1

TRAUMA AND LIFE-SAVING ENCOUNTERS WITH THE NUMINOUS

Ring the bell that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's where the light comes in
(Leonard Cohen, *Anthem*, 1992)

Mineralogists tell us that if you want to understand the basic structure of a crystal, you should examine the places where it is broken. In this chapter I present a series of cases where traumatic experiences have broken the "crystal" of people's ongoing, otherwise cohesive lives and let in a mysterious light. The broken places or lines of cleavage represent what we call moments of *dissociation*, and dissociation is something the psyche *does* in response to trauma. In order to protect us from the full impact of experience that is unbearable, different aspects of the traumatic experience (sensation, affect, image) are fragmented, divided into compartments, and encoded in segmented "neural nets" in the brain (see Badenoch, 2008: 9). In this way they are prevented from joining up into a meaningful whole. After this we no longer make sense to ourselves. We can't tell our own story as a coherent narrative.

The poet Emily Dickinson puts it this way:

There is a pain – so utter–
That it swallows substance up–
Then covers the Abyss with Trance–
So Memory can step
Around – across – upon it–
As one within a Swoon–
Goes safely – where an open eye–
Would drop him – Bone by bone.
(Dickinson, 1961: 599)

The traumatic trance to which the poet alludes is something I have previously called the *self-care system* (Kalsched, 1996: 4). This system of defenses has a *telos* or *purpose* which we will try to discover in the following pages. The cases presented in this chapter and throughout the book will provide support for a tentative hypothesis—that *the purpose of the self-care system is to keep an innocent core of the self out of further suffering in reality, by keeping it "safe" in another world.* Further, this innocent core of the self is a sacred *something* within the human personality that is often referred to as the soul. The defensive system that "covers the abyss with trance" tries to keep the innocent remnant of the whole self from being further impacted by suffering-in-reality. This protection has survival value for the individual menaced by a traumatic environment, but it proves to be problematic in the long run because psychological growth depends on a relational process through which the innocent core of the self gradually accrues experience. Dissociative defenses prevent this and thus compromise personal development.

In its function of sequestering the vulnerable core of the self, the self-care system employs certain very powerful forces from a layer of the unconscious that Jung called "collective" or "archetypal." These forces, in turn, are often experienced as spiritual or "numinous."[1] They can put the person in a trance or violently fragment the inner world so that acute pain is not experienced. They are trans-egoic powers, and hence, in studying the protean forces that come to the psyche's rescue in traumatic dissociation, we are given a view into the dark hinterland of psychic reality where otherwise invisible powers reside. These powers[2] normally support the ego's functioning, but at critical moments (trauma) they are recruited for defensive purposes, and without help this leads to psychopathology and unlived life.

What I have called trans-egoic powers are visible in dreams and other imaginative products of the human psyche during the psychotherapy process. These personified presences are found in all the cases in this chapter and the others that follow. As the reader will discover, individuals with a history of childhood trauma frequently seem to have access to altered states in which they are tuned in, as it were, to frequencies that most of us cannot see or hear. Many of them apparently have genuine paranormal abilities (see Reiner, 2004, 2006). The otherwise invisible world of spirit seems more accessible to them, and their dreams are sometimes archetypal dramas like something out of science-fiction films such as *Star Wars* or mytho-poetic sagas like *Lord of the Rings.* Sometimes they have had life-saving encounters with the positive side of the numinous, a "voice" or a "presence" that has come to them in a moment of great need like a guardian angel, and given them a kind of inner security that no outer human being has ever provided.

At other times, however, they seem to be menaced by dark and frightening energies and images—demonic voices or persecutory inner entities

that can attack, shame, and humiliate them from within, re-traumatizing them and driving them to despair and abject hopelessness, sometimes even to suicide. Whether positive or negative, these volcanic and impersonal libidinal or aggressive powers are the untransformed, therefore *mythological*, expressions of what Winnicott and other object-relations theorists call childhood omnipotence. But they also seem to be more than that. They are the personified representatives of universal archetypal forces and, as such, they seem to be ordered by a central archetype with a remarkable "intelligence." In this sense, childhood omnipotence has a kind of "implicate order" (see Bohm, 1980) that unfolds in predictable patterns.

In this chapter we explore the striking relationship between trauma and encounters with positive, integrative aspects of this archetypal dimension (the darker aspects of the dissociative powers will be explored in Chapter 3, 4, and 9). The people who have such positive, integrative experiences never forget them. And following such experiences, many of them report that they are no longer afraid of death. We might speculate that in these moments the subject momentarily sees through a veil that normally separates ordinary reality from non-ordinary reality. Such moments provide glimpses or "hints" of a transcendent or ineffable dimension to human experience.

Depth psychology's discovery of the spirit world

Many of the pioneers of depth psychology have described "spiritual" phenomena suddenly visible *through a gap created by trauma*, although their discoveries have remained on the margins of accepted theory. For example, 100 years ago, the great American psychologist William James described how experiences that appear to "break" us (trauma) also "open" us to another dimension of experience which we are inclined to label as soulful or spiritual:

> Briefly, the facts I have in mind may all be described as experiences of an unexpected life succeeding upon death. By this I don't mean immortality, or the death of the body. I mean the deathlike termination of certain mental processes within the individual's experience, processes that run to failure, and in some individuals, at least, eventuate in despair.... The phenomenon is that of new ranges of life succeeding on our most despairing moments. There are resources in us that naturalism with its literal and legal virtues never recks of, possibilities that take our breath away, of another kind of happiness and power, based on giving up our own will and letting something higher work for us, and these seem to show a world wilder than either physics or philistine ethics can imagine.
>
> (James, 1977: 137–8)

In the same lecture, James goes on to say that he finds the various facts concerning the divided or split personality demonstrated by Janet, Charcot, and others to provide the strongest evidence yet for our connection to a wider spiritual world or environment from which we are ordinarily shut off. His findings support the binocular vision of "two worlds" that we are taking in this book:

> In a word, the believer is continuous, to his own consciousness, at any rate, with a wider self from which saving experiences flow in. Those who have such experiences distinctly enough and often enough to live in the light of them remain quite unmoved by criticism, from whatever quarter it may come.... They have had their vision and they know—that is enough—that we inhabit an invisible spiritual environment from which help comes, our soul being mysteriously one with a larger soul whose instruments we are.
>
> (James, 1977: 139)

And, James suggests, these two worlds are often *potentiated* by traumatic experience. In his 1896 Lowell Lectures James concludes: "If there are supernormal powers, it is through the cracked and fragmented self that they enter" (quoted in Taylor, 1984: 110).

Later, Sandor Ferenczi made a similar discovery quite independent of James. Recorded in his *Clinical Diary* (Ferenczi, 1988) he showed how certain "primordial powers"—long since dormant—were "awakened" by trauma. "In moments of great need," he said,

> when the psychic system proves to be incapable of an adequate response, or when these specific [psychic] organs have been violently destroyed, then the primordial psychic powers are aroused and it will be these forces that will seek to overcome the disruption.... These reflections open the way to an understanding of the surprisingly intelligent reactions of the unconscious in moments of great distress ... [including] incidents of clairvoyance.
>
> The Intellect [in such cases] is without time and space, therefore supra-individual. "Orpha."
>
> (Ferenczi, 1988: 6–13)

"Orpha" was the name that Ferenczi gave to a remarkable inner object that had come to the rescue of a patient named Elizabeth Severn, identified in the *Diary* as "RN." Orpha was no ordinary inner object, but rather identified itself as Elizabeth Severn's "guardian angel"—an inner, all-knowing, precociously intellectual part of the self that seemed to have access to higher powers. Ferenczi and his patient were able to reconstruct the life-saving activities of this remarkable inner object. At the moment of impossible suffering, Orpha would exit through an imaginary hole in the

patient's head, ascend into the starry vault, and become an "astral fragment," shining off in the distance like a star, full of compassion and understanding while the patient's body was being tortured and abused (Ferenczi, 1988: 206). After the acute trauma had passed, Orpha would descend again and help the shattered child assemble some kind of minimally functioning self with which to go on existing.

Ferenczi speculates about the spiritual implications of Orpha:

> To what extent do those who have "gone mad" from pain, that is, those who have departed from the usual egocentric point of view, become able through their special situation to experience a part of that immaterial reality which remains inaccessible to us materialists? And here the direction of research must become involved with the so-called occult. Cases of thought transference during the analysis of suffering people are extraordinarily frequent ... and it is possible that even the intelligence of which we are so proud is not our property but must be replaced or regenerated through the rhythmic outpouring of the ego into the universe, which alone is all knowing and therefore intelligent.
>
> (Ferenczi, 1988: 33)

C.G. Jung was led toward a similar discovery and toward similar mystical speculations by observing the creative fantasy products of some of his severely traumatized patients at the Burgholzli Psychiatric Hospital in Zurich, where he spent his early years as a psychiatrist. It is unlikely that Freud ever experienced the florid psychotic features so typical of the life-threatening early trauma that Jung saw in these patients.

What really excited Jung were the archaic and typical (archetypal) parallels between his patient's dream and fantasy productions and the mythological and religious imagery with which he was acquainted from his classical studies. These parallels had already been noted by other investigators, most notably Frederick Myers, whose work (1903) was perhaps the first great resource for a psychology of the subconscious mind. Myers had talked about a *mytho-poetic* function of the unconscious, available in glimpses of "another world," i.e., a deeper stratum of the subliminal mind sometimes activated in cases of severe dissociation. Both James and Jung saw here the possibility that "another world" of reality might shine through from this deep stratum in the unconscious.

The idea that mytho-poetic images represent a different world of reality—*psychic reality*—was Jung's painful discovery during the despairing time after his break with Freud and recorded in the *Red Book* (Jung, 2009). In his "active imagination" Jung treated the invisible "powers" of his dreams and visions as *real*. He spoke with them and they responded—often with information and wisdom that Jung did not know consciously. The relative autonomy of these personified psychic powers was something all too

familiar to Jung from his psychotic patients. But the idea that such powers might be "organized" by meaningful—even redemptive—motifs having to do with the human soul, that was something else again.

Freud could not follow Jung into this mytho-poetic territory. Freud recognized that our basic instincts (Triebe) out-pictured themselves as mental representations, but he hesitated to attribute any kind of ontological "reality" to them. Instead he called their psychic reality a "particular form of existence" (*eine besondere Existenzform*), which got its reality-like character from the undeniable power of the unconscious (see Loewald, 1978: 8–9). Although seemingly "real," this world, he said, was not to be confused with factual or material reality, i.e., the ego's world. Hence Jung became a man of "two worlds" while Freud insisted that psychic reality be reduced, where possible, to one world ("where id was, ego shall be"). This difference is foundational in assessing the relative contributions of Freud and Jung to a psychology of religious experience. For Jung, "psychic reality" has a collective layer and mediates "spiritual" experience. To relate consciously with this world is good for the soul.

Encounters with the mystery

The following personal stories, several from my own practice, describe encounters with the mysterious "powers" residing in the collective layer of the psyche. Each was constellated by a traumatic experience. My first example is a story I've written about elsewhere (Kalsched, 1996: 41). I repeat it here because it gives a vivid example of the uncanny intelligence of the psyche and because it demonstrates so clearly the relationship between the "broken places" and the "light."

Little girl and the angel

The story[3] comes indirectly from Esther Harding, a Jungian analyst in New York to whom it was reported by the mother of a little girl, aged 6.

> The mother sent her young daughter to her father's study one morning to deliver an important note, written on a piece of paper. The little girl went off to deliver the note. Shortly thereafter the daughter came back in tears and said "I'm sorry mother, the angel won't let me go in." Whereupon the mother sent the daughter back a second time, with the same result only this time more tears and distress. At this point the mother became irritated at her youngster's imaginative excess, so she took her little girl by the hand and the two of them marched the message over to the father. As they entered the father's study, the mother saw her husband slumped in his chair, his drink spilled on the floor, dead from a heart attack.

This story brings home to us the miraculous and daimonic powers of the archetypal psyche in its efforts to preserve what I have called the imperishable personal spirit or soul. The painting by Henrietta Wyeth (Plate 2) called *Death and the Child* illustrates this poignant moment. In this arresting image an angel is covering the eyes of a child so that she does not "see" the unbearable reality of death. As the artist seems to be aware, some traumatic affects simply cannot be processed with the normal resources available to the ego of a young child, and deeper resources need to be marshaled. These deeper resources are what Winnicott calls "primitive defenses," but there is no acknowledgment in Winnicott of what a miracle they are, or how essential their "spiritual" content can be to the emotional survival of a child.

There are three ways to interpret this event. If we took the usual materialistic/reductionistic view, the child "made up" the angel in order to tolerate the intolerable ... thus the angel would be a fantasy, an hallucination, a "spiritual defense." Freud thought all religion was a derivative of such defenses ... fantasies to make the intolerable realities of life more tolerable.

On the other hand, from a "supernatural" perspective, we would say that the guardian angel, representing a genuine spiritual agency, intervened from "on high" in the little girl's earthly existence, at a moment of impossible suffering, and blocked her access to her father's room. The Christian church might describe such an event as a genuine miracle of "salvation."

A (third) psycho-spiritual approach (between the worlds) might go as follows: The guardian angel could be viewed defensively—yes, but then comes the question, what is it defending? And where does its uncanny wisdom and compassion come from? Could the angel represent a universal self-protective agency from the collective layer of the unconscious (resident perhaps in its "celestial" or "spiritual" component—see Jung, 1988: 441–4) that sometimes intervenes in the ego's affairs when it is confronted by the "too much" of trauma, like Ferenczi's Orpha? This agency seems to know something the ego doesn't—as if the angel "saw" the ego-annihilating horror of what this little girl was about to experience (her father's death) and appeared at precisely that moment to block the threshold of his room. This angel would have put the little girl in an altered state ("covered the abyss with trance") and in this way dissociated her from an unbearable reality until her mother could help mediate and humanize her overwhelming anxiety and grief. In other words, the angel would have protected the child's soul from annihilation.

So in this third (mytho-poetic) view, the angel would also be a defense against too much reality too soon, but the "goal" of the defense would be neither salvation nor hallucinatory protection. More primarily, its "goal" would be to *restore a mytho-poetic matrix between reality and fantasy because this is where the little girl's soul lives, and the angel appears to be a guardian of this soul. So conceived, the survival of the soul is the main "purpose" of the self-care system.*

To say that the human soul lives in a mytho-poetic matrix between reality and fantasy is one way to think about the importance of what D.W. Winnicott means by transitional space between the mother and baby, self and other, self and world. Transitional space is, for Winnicott, the space through which the baby makes the crucial transition from omnipotence to the reality principle. It involves mysterious processes like the "indwelling" and "personalization" of some vital spark of the person so that something *more* is going on than the baby's hallucination of the breast joined up with the mother's actual breast (see Introduction). There is also an inner process—a transitional space between the ego and its deep ground in what Jung called the Self. This is apparently the "space" where angels and other hybrid *daimonic* beings have their hybrid existence.

In this view, perhaps the little girl's angel provided an *inner* transitional figure—an intermediary—in the absence of an outer one. At the moment of dissociation, perhaps this inner reality bleeds through the dissociative rupture into outer reality and appears as an external "being." This mytho-poetic "blood" eventually scabs over and plugs the impossible wound with a universal story, before the personal story can even get started. But in so doing, it gives the little girl's ego something to hang onto, something movingly true about the soul's need at this moment, i.e., *somebody cares!* And this "somebody" seems to be more than the actual mother—or at least more than the actual mother at this moment.

One might ask, "How does *any* child metabolize the reality of death—death of her beloved father—no matter how adequate the outer mediation?" Aren't we all "orphans of the Real" in this sense? And don't we all have mytho-poetic (spiritual) stories that provide a matrix of meaning to help hold our souls in being, on the edge of that frightening abyss called death? Does it sometimes take a trauma to render the ultimate mystery into an adequate story? Maybe even to make it livable? Trauma confronts the child with the pains of living before resources are available from outside—therefore requiring inner resources, "spiritual resources." Otherwise the soul stumbles.

We do not know the end to this story. We don't know if this little girl would have been one of Grotstein's "orphans of the Real" or not. If the mother's empathic mediation of this experience was adequate and help was found to metabolize this trauma through play and imaginative attention to the little girl's feelings and ideas, then the guardian angel would have served her purpose as a temporary provider of a mytho-poetic matrix for the soul. Eventually she would have retired into the unconscious background. If, on the other hand, the mother disappeared into her own anxiety and depression for days or weeks, then the daughter's angel might have turned into a pervasive mental presence and would have provided a *substitute* for reality, instead of being mixed up with it, as in transitional space. The angel would then have overseen the encapsulation of the traumatic experience so that the sensations, affects, and ideas associated with

this moment would be isolated from normal memory-encoding processes. Slowly the angel would have turned dark and ultimately would have overseen further dissociative processes. We will see a vivid example of such a "fallen angel" and its violent effects in Dante's journey into the Inferno, the first book of his *Divine Comedy* (Chapter 3).

My point in providing this example early in this book's discussion is to indicate how we might try to hold simultaneously a spiritual and material view of this mysterious situation and others like it. Referring back to our Inuit Storyteller mask in the Introduction (Figure I.1), this would mean maintaining both inward- and outward-focused vision—a "binocular" view. Only such a paradoxical stance would do justice to the mysteries involved in this case. Just as Winnicott insists that after the baby has both created and discovered the breast, "it is a matter of agreement between us and the baby that we will never ask the question: 'Did you conceive of this or was it presented to you from without?'" (Winnicott, 1971: 12), we would never ask the traumatized little girl in this example whether she "found" the angel out there or "created" her from within herself. Such a question would violate the soul because it would threaten the intermediate space, the mytho-poetic matrix where the human soul finds a medium for its growth and development. This is the matrix from which all meaningful stories grow, and the soul needs a story—a resonant image—that is adequate to its own biography.

Visitations at the moment of dying

The following two accounts involve near-death experiences in which the question of whether to live or die was mediated and witnessed by a remarkable presence who reassured both children that they had a choice about life in this world. In both cases the story of this presence became an inner secret, privately cherished and not shared with others for fear of being made fun of, or seen as "crazy." In both cases, the telling of the story itself had a healing effect.

Jennifer and the angel

A little girl, who I will call "Jennifer," who later became my patient, remembered with great grief the place where she was sitting in the school playground, separated from the other children, when she realized that she was "broken." She was only eight years old. But for two years she had been sexually violated on a regular basis by her older step-brother, who threatened to injure her if she told about it. She knew she was different now—somehow damaged, no longer able to play, robbed of her innocence, broken. We could say that her heart had been broken and this was true, but she couldn't feel her own sadness about these losses until much later in therapy. Instead, she felt "bad," dissociated, split off, and like an alien

in a world that other children seemed to occupy without difficulty. This alienation was two-fold. She felt alienated from people in the outer world and she felt alienated from herself. Whereas before she had been "at-one" with herself, playing and growing like a normal kid, after the sexual abuse started she was "at odds" with herself, "beside" herself, split in two—one part observing, finding fault with herself, criticizing and comparing, one part full of shame, anxiously trying to fit in. The essential self that she knew herself to be—the very heart of her personality—had gone into hiding, so deep into hiding that she herself had lost contact with it. She soldiered on with great courage through her half-lived life, but something essential was missing and she didn't know what it was.

When Jennifer grew up and entered therapy with me, she would tell me she had lost her soul. There were fleeting moments, she reported, when her soul would return to her—when she painted alone in her studio, or isolated times in nature—but most of the time she felt devoid of value inside and she was convinced of her own lack—her own "badness." She suffered terribly, but much of this suffering was a corrosive self-criticism and shame about herself that never relented even if she found love and acceptance on the outside. It was as though, in the space inside which her soul had vacated, a dark mocking spirit had moved in, a mental spirit that negated everything and filled her with despair and hopelessness. As the years went by she began to feel more and more defeated—more and more "failed" compared to others, and more and more bitter and victimized by her circumstances. She was surviving, but she was not living. "I have to construct a self," she told me later, "instead of living out of a self. Other people seem to have the right to 'be' in a different way than I do ... I always have to be 'for' someone or 'for' some other purpose."

Therapy was a place where she could begin to find and tell her true story—not the false, self-blaming victim/perpetrator story whispered to her in the background by her inner "voices," or by what Corrigan and Gordon (1995) might call her pathological "mind object." But there was great resistance to this true story because of the grief that came up as she began to allow herself to feel compassion for the small and helpless confused little person she was when the sexual abuse began. One of the memories that helped her toward this self-compassion was a "visitation" she had at age seven from a "presence of light"—a presence she interpreted as an angel, representing the positive, integrative side of the spirit world and a power that supported her will to live.

She was near death, lying in a busy emergency room on a gurney with a ruptured bowel caused by the rape of her abusive step-brother—when she heard one of the ER nurses remark "don't take much trouble with her; she's not going to make it anyway." She remembered fighting the sweet smell of the ether as she lost consciousness, vowing that she would live to spite them and prove them wrong. Later she found herself in a narrow hospital corridor with the familiar pain that had companioned her for so

long now replaced by the dull ache of tight bandages. She wondered if they knew she was there and that she was still alive, despite their prediction.

At last, she was moved into a room with another child. As she lay on her back watching, she saw this other beautiful blonde child sitting in bed, coloring—using crayons from a box like she used at school. It was then that she formed the thought that there could be some reason to continue fighting. Though she had closed her eyes, the image of the large, bright-colored crayons stayed with her and the need to make a picture. "Can I color?" she asked. "I want to color." Her tenacity impressed the nurses and they let her try. She became their "little wonder" the "miraculous recovery." But her recovery didn't last.

Now it was months later—a bitter cold winter afternoon. She was alone in a somber timeless space, a cocoon of fever and pain from a recurrence of peritonitis. She was lying in bed moving in and out of sleep, aware that things were not right, that she was getting worse not better, despite assurances to the contrary. She was alone with this secret. At her side lay a remnant of a Christmas that had occurred without her. It was a large tin box of watercolors. While she barely had the strength to hold her treasure she had spent the weary afternoon examining each color. Each one was like a beautiful jewel full of possibility and yet, now, as her vital signs began to flag, she thought "what use is this to me now?"

The angel, when it came to her, was in the midst of a soft white-yellow light beside her to the right. Neither male nor female, it was at once terrible and cool and somehow unsurprisingly familiar. Calmly and caringly, the ethereal messenger declared without preamble, "You don't have to continue; it's all right to let go now." The presence paused then continued, "If you decide to stay it won't be easy."

Jennifer remembered that it was so tempting to let go at this moment and so very easy not to call out for help. But in her agonizing deliberation, her eyes fell on the box of watercolors and went to the color Rose Madder. A sense of longing came over her. "I need to use this color," she thought. "How can I leave without using this color? I must stay to paint—to use my colors." Without daring to look directly into the light, she told the angel that she knew that she must stay in life.

In the quiet stillness of that momentary state of grace, Jennifer knew that she was found and held by a serene intelligence beyond herself. With her angel's visit, came a quiet sense of belonging, a knowing that she was a part of something greater than herself.

Now she had something to do that was important in the grand scheme of things, and although she didn't know it then, the passion for color that helped her make this choice for life, stayed with her throughout and led to her vocation as an artist.

Despite her unbearable childhood pain and almost complete loss of hope, Jennifer had the privilege of seeing through to something "beyond

this world" and that made all the difference. Her lonely suffering now had a witness. It changed her world view. She experienced what the ancient poet Aeschylus meant when he said in *Agamemnon* (1957: 9, lines 179–83):

> And even in our sleep, pain that cannot forget,
> falls drop by drop upon the heart,
> And in our own despair, against our will,
> Comes wisdom,
> By the awful grace of God

My patient teared up as she recounted her story—a story she had told no one for 50 years. She remembered making the decision for life, and it impressed her that she had been able to do this. The fact that this angelic spirit had visited her and witnessed her "sickness unto death," then let her know that there was a bigger story about her life than the one she could see as a seven year old, i.e., namely that she would be "all-right" if she let herself slide down the slippery slope into death—all this moved her profoundly. Her recounting of the story moved me profoundly. A kind of poignant wisdom and soulful depth entered the room, and we were both changed by it.

Comment

If we were to try to account for my patient's experience with a theoretical understanding that bridged the "two worlds" and that made room for both the psyche and the spirit, it might go something like this: Sexual abuse by Jennifer's step-brother was a life-altering, heart-breaking experience, by definition traumatic because it overwhelmed the integrative capacities of her immature ego and was therefore dissociated, i.e., disconnected from the continuity of her developing ego-identity. From this moment on, the transitional space (Winnicott) of her becoming-a-person was foreclosed. Her ongoing life now housed a gap, an interruption in ego development (she described this as being "broken"). Through this gap, we might imagine that some animating spirit that she had previously known as her "soul" escaped the unity of her body/mind, disappearing into the unknown. Yet through this same gap, at the darkest moment, she glimpsed a "presence" that seemed concerned about her and the story of her life.

This angel seemed to hold Jennifer's ego in being, even through the darkest hours, a presence in the absence of any human person. Jennifer knew that there was no human container for her tears now. .. she could not process her trauma with anyone in her family or friends. But she now felt witnessed and companioned by a presence on the threshold of another world until she could find such a person in this one.

Because the soul seems to represent an animating essence or true self at the center of every person, loss of the soul left my patient in suspended animation, feeling only half-alive, numb or frozen, unable to live from a

center of aliveness and creativity, alienated, fragmented, and depressed. In her psychotherapy she hoped to restore that sense of aliveness, and together we tried to create a safe space for the soul's return. This happened gradually and incrementally in moments within the safety of the space we had created together, where she found the courage to admit to the desperate need she felt all her life together with the shame that came up around this need.

Some of the most important moments in our work were intensely unpleasant for Jennifer, and involved my challenging the "grown up," ingratiating way she defended herself from what she truly felt inside—feelings that she believed would identify her once and for all as defective, uninteresting, or sick. It was as though I had to patiently find my way through the labyrinth of her "presented self"—to the affective core inside that her security operations kept hiding. Not surprisingly, underneath the apparently engaging surface talk was the core conviction of her own defect, her own unlovableness, her basic assumption of being "damaged goods." This conviction was being kept in place by a harsh, tyrannical introject who would tell her "don't let him see how sick you are; don't speak, it'll be wrong, change your clothes you look ridiculous, you can't have that—it'll just be taken away from you, you're too fat to attract a man," and so on. This inner figure—the "other side" of Jennifer's guardian angel, will appear as the featured "demon" in several cases presented in Chapter 3.

The tyrannical negative voices in Jennifer's self-care system could not be heard clearly because they were ego-syntonic. They spoke what she thought was the "truth" about her. Reassurance from me made no difference, because anything positive was always trumped by the inner tyrant. Yet the slightest sign of flagging interest on my part such as my lateness, distraction—even moments of silence between us—would bring terror and the projection of the demon. Now I must be "fed up with her," now I was "going to end her therapy out of boredom," now the one person she had found to tell her story to would become "sick of her and turn away."

Slowly, as we processed and repaired these ruptures in our rapport, a space opened up between her observing ego and the interpretive "system" within. This space made room for her own sadness, and tears began to rim her eyes when she spoke of her experience. Something more authentic developed between us, and her memory and report of the early moment with her angel and her choice of life at that moment took us into a much deeper intimacy than we had experienced before. *This intimacy had something to do with holding together (between us) the objective tragedy of her early life.* Not the oft-repeated victim/perpetrator story but the objective *tragedy* (and ultimate triumph) of her life. Sharing this deeper reality gave us glimpses of the "One Great Story"[4] underneath her personal story—the place where she participated in the tragedy (and triumph) of all human life and took on her own share of darkness (and light).

To recognize one's participation in normal human tragedy is different from feeling like a *failure* as a human being. Jennifer now realized that there was more to her than the summation of her outward successes and failures. A part of her was connected to something larger and when she told her story about the angel, this "something more" was in the room between us. We knew this through the unbidden emotion that welled up in both of us and by the sense of blessing that filled the space. Jennifer said she thought telling me this story brought her soul back in some way.

As if providing a lightning rod for other life-affirming energies in her inner atmosphere, the telling of her story of the angel stimulated a variety of other heretofore unspoken memories of Jennifer's early life. For example, there was the fact that before the abuse began she was a fighter—the top child in the pecking order with other children. She would bite kids who were mean to her and defend herself. She also loved to dance and wore out a record of the Nutcracker Suite dancing in the basement in her ballet costume. Even when the abuse had begun, she felt safety in the local church, where she joined the choir and remembers the relief she felt hearing that Jesus loved her, even though she was bad. She told me about her prayer life and how when she felt suicidal she would pray for help and often receive a message back. She recalled being told: "You can kill yourself if you need to, but just give it a few more weeks ... things will get better."

One story was about a special sacred space at a nearby abandoned farm—a hillside where she would always go in March, no matter how cold it was. Having closed herself off in numbed isolation at home, she would steal away on sunny days to her special spot in the field. There, with the cold wind nipping at her fingers, she could commune with the beauty of nature all around her, and in the safety of this place she could offer her tears to the earth-mother who would comfort her with sunshine and silence. It was in this special place that she also made a promise to God that if he would let her live, she would devote her life to helping other children who hurt like she did.

All these memories were part of a developing story that Jennifer was telling me and telling herself. It was now a "two-eyed" story involving inner and outer worlds, whereas her first presentation had been all one-dimensional, factual, and without soul. Of course, this integrated narrative did not happen all at once and there were many detours and regressions, but overall we were now constructing a truer, deeper, and more meaningful story.

Jennifer also taught me something about "out-of-body" experience which is germane to the psycho-spiritual view we are taking in this book. Here's what she said:

> When I was near death, floating above my body in the emergency room, there was a sense of neutrality and safety ... a dispassionate

> sense ... visually the body was below. There was the thought "why not leave further?" but I was afraid of losing sight of my body altogether ... I didn't want this. Along with this was a sense of being connected to something larger than myself. There's a kind of consciousness on the other side that's broader.... I don't know how to say it. I suppose it could be "past lives" ... perhaps ... as if something collects consciousness through successive lives ... there was this bigger understanding, like a grown up compassion for the world. I felt sorry for my parents that night. My compassion knew no bounds.

This report runs directly parallel to some speculations by William James in his Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College in 1908. These passages were unknown to my patient. Here's what James had to say:

> The numerous facts of divided or split human personality which the genius of certain medical men, as Janet, Freud, Prince ... and others, have unearthed—the phenomena of automatic writing and speech, mediumship and "possession"—in these abnormal or supernormal facts [I find] the strongest suggestions in favor of a superior co-consciousness being possible. I doubt whether we shall ever understand some of them without using the very letter of Fechner's conception of a great reservoir in which the memories of earth's inhabitants are pooled and preserved, and from which, when the threshold lowers or the valve opens, information ordinarily shut out leaks into the mind of exceptional individuals among us ... I think it may be asserted that there *are* religious experiences of a specific nature and they point with reasonable probability to the continuity of our consciousness with a wider spiritual environment from which the ordinary prudential man (who is the only man that scientific psychology, so called, takes cognizance of) is shut off.
>
> (James, 1977: 134–5)

The uncanny resemblance between Jennifer's experience and Fechner's idea that there might be a dimension of consciousness that transcends time and space and includes the pooled memories of our ancestors, is striking. It links with Ferenczi's speculations (above) when he encountered Orpha's uncanny wisdom in his patient "R.N." and supports Jung's idea of a collective unconscious beyond the personal unconscious.

Jennifer's narcissism at the beginning of our work, i.e., her almost complete identification with her "presented self," and the way this gave way to her developing capacity for engaging the suffering of her true, inner sadness, finds some interesting parallels in Kierkegaard's psychospiritual writings. Kierkegaard called the narcissistic stage the *aesthetic*,

and the aesthetic individual he said, lives in total unconscious immediacy "enmeshed" in the external and the temporal, "anxiously fearing that the Eternal might break through to remind him that his whole life is a lie" (Kierkegaard, 1972: 183). Unable to reveal himself to anyone, he also cannot love; hence his existence is shot through with an abysmal melancholy and despair—a "hysteria of the spirit" (Kierkegaard, 1972: 193). For this condition Kierkegaard has but one remedy—*an act of despair*. For Kierkegaard, this moment was the beginning of a genuinely ethico-religious life.

In and through this act of surrender, man (paradoxically) chooses himself or, more correctly, receives himself:

> So when all has become still around one, as solemn as a starlit night, when the soul is alone in the whole world, then there appears before one, not a distinguished man, but the eternal Power itself. The heavens part, as it were, and the I chooses itself—or rather receives itself. Then the soul beholds the loftiest sight that mortal eye can see and which never can be forgotten; then the personality receives the accolade of knighthood which ennobles it for eternity. He does not become another man than he was before, but he becomes himself. Consciousness is unified, and he is himself.
>
> (Kierkegaard, 1972: 181)

This beautiful paragraph reflects Kierkegaard's conviction that the human self is a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity. Unawareness of this fact leads to the kind of "hysteria of the spirit" or "sickness unto death" that drives the person into a one-dimensional, external life (narcissism) leading nowhere. Paradoxically, the act of truly owning one's despair—the tragedy without blame that Jennifer began to acknowledge—brings intimations of the ineffable—the light, now shining through the broken place, now fully acknowledged. C.G. Jung went through a similar experience of ego collapse at depth, followed by a renewal of life. We will follow Jung's path into the darkness in Chapter 8.

Near-death encounter with an angel of light

The following account of a near-death experience came to my attention after a lecture I gave on the subject of "Trauma and the Soul" at a conference on religion and psychology sponsored by a Quaker group in Eastern Pennsylvania in 2004. It was the end of the third day of the conference and I was fielding questions from a small group of attendees who had waited to have some individual time with me. A middle-aged man approached tentatively from the rear and told me that my lecture had

triggered an experience he had not recalled for many years. It happened when he was 17 years old. He began to tell me the story—then glanced around hesitantly—fearing, he said, that his story was "too weird." Others in our small group sensed the delicacy of the situation and slowly slipped away, leaving us alone.

R. Dixon Bell then told me an abridged version of the story that follows. As he finished, I asked him if he had ever written this story down, to which he said "no." I gave him my e-mail address and suggested that he might want to write the full story—that it would be a way of honoring something that was obviously very important to him—something that might be important for others to hear as well. A detailed story arrived in my inbox a few days later, with his permission to use portions of it. A further elaboration of the story and his encounter with me was later published in a local Quaker paper (Bell, 2006: 18–19).

The acute medical condition that led to Mr. Bell's remarkable experience was a serious infection in the medial section of the anterior wall of his right nasal passage during his adolescence. The infection had eaten through the nasal wall and weakened an artery in his brain, which periodically burst, threatening death by hemorrhage. Rushed to the hospital from school, where he was when his artery had burst, Mr. Bell was treated by a skilled otolaryngologist who succeeded in packing the sinus passage and the prognosis initially looked favorable.

In addition to bed-rest and constant monitoring, a routine of four injections every four hours was begun. As the days went by, inexplicably, Mr. Bell's condition worsened. He could feel himself weakening. Here is the story as he told it:

> I could tell my condition was worsening and becoming desperate. I could see it in the downcast eyes of my doctor, in the worried silences of my parents, in the suddenly voiceless nurses attending me. My hospital bed was becoming a deathbed.... Suddenly, I was floating in a vast, velvet darkness, utterly black and comfortable. As I floated I peered around, exulting in my freedom. I inspected every degree of the sphere within which I dwelt. It was perfect—except for this smallest of smudges directly before me, this pixel, if one could call it that, of blue white color troubling the beautiful and comforting blackness. That smudge irritated me, and as my attention became more fixed upon it, I found that I was drawn toward it at great speed. The light grew. I realized it was beaming from a portal shaped like a door's opening but with an arch at the top. The light was intensely white with a bluish cast.
>
> Suddenly I was inside and directly in front of me was the source of the light, a towering figure without neck or limbs whose body seemed to be a cloudlike garment over its head, a garment which fell to, and became a part of, the cloudlike floor. The light

emanated from "his" eyes (although gendered pronouns have no place here). His eyes were his only feature, and I was surprised that I could look right into them without pain. I was immediately filled with the entire embrace of this being: I realized that whatever or whoever he was, he loved me beyond all measure, past all longing. I moved ninety degrees to my right; his eyes followed me. Part of me wanted to see the portal through which I had just arrived. It was not there. Beyond the figure and to its left was only a small, globular protuberance which I took to be a bush. Like everything else it was intensely white with a bluish cast.

"YOU..." The word thundered into my being. It was completely new and refreshing, something that had come to me directly from the furnaces of creation. It filled my entire essence. I realized that the word had just appeared. I had not heard it. It meant me, that beautiful part of me that only "YOU..." could name. I reveled in the fullness of its meaning, the perfection it communicated. I was fused to those eyes...

"MAY..." Discovery again. Music from the beginning of the universe. Until now I had never heard, never considered the truest meaning of "...may..." the absolute freedom of choice.

"STAY..." One syllable words spilled into my mind. Within each lay the promise of total knowledge...

"... OR ... YOU ... MAY ... GO ... BACK."

An image of my mother and father overcome with indescribable sadness filled me. A moment of sadness at the possibility of leaving grew within me. Then consuming anger. Anger directed at that spot inside my head weeping blood. Explosive anger, full of energy and heat. I knew my choice...

I awoke in the middle of the night. I was well. Three days later I walked out of the hospital. My doctor was amazed.

Later (I was just seventeen) I read accounts of persons who had had "near death" experiences. I knew what they had seen. I am not a risk taker, but since that day I have not feared death.... And I have never forgotten an instant of what I experienced in that bed when I was a very sick teenager in March of 1966.

In his later article in the *Quaker Journal*, Mr. Bell reflects on his decision to tell his story to me after that lecture.

Ultimately I have never felt better than I did for having walked up to that lectern and shared something personal. The onerous steps to Dr. Kalsched's lectern led to one of the most liberating experiences of my life. The part of my soul I had hidden walked boldly out into the broad sunshine of the world, and the world hardly even blinked. Most importantly, in that spiritual encounter I felt

the closest kind of security and ineffable love welling up and becoming a solid and accessible part of my persona.

I found myself too wound up to sleep after my conversation with Donald Kalsched, so I took a stroll across the Lebanon Valley campus. Almost immediately I noticed the spire of the chapel, bathed in an intensely white light with a bluish cast. I smiled, knowing that I was in a place similar to where a bright angel had lit the inner light of my own soul so long ago.

Comment on previous two cases: choosing life

One of the remarkable things about the previous two accounts is that both Jennifer and Mr. Bell were offered a "choice" by their respective angels. This choice seems to have mobilized their respective will-to-live—in Jennifer's case, for a "positive" reason so she could color with Rose Madder, like the young girl she saw in hospital. With Mr. Bell, the choice mobilized his awareness of deep attachment to his family and the grief that would be experienced by his parents if he died. A fierce refusal to allow this came up inside him. In each of these two cases, a strong determination to live emerged in response to the angels' witnessing presence and voice.

Neville Symington, the Australian psychoanalyst, has emphasized this moment of choosing life. He calls it a choice for the *lifegiver*, which he sees as a mystical internal object made up of aspects of the self and of the external life-supporting object. The *lifegiver* only comes into being if we choose it. Symington says that many moments in life face us with this existential dilemma—whether to choose or foreswear the *lifegiver*. It is an act of faith. If the lifegiver is refused, the result is a withdrawal into the self and some form of pathological narcissism (see Symington, 1993: 3).

Symington wants to say that trauma in childhood is not the crucial factor in whether primitive psychological defenses take over a person's life and lead them toward narcissism. Rather, it is the individual's *response* to the trauma—whether, in the face of unbearable pain, they can still choose the *lifegiver*. Clearly, in both the cases of Jennifer and Mr. Bell, this choice was made and we would have to imagine that the appearance of the angelic presence helped both of them to resist the undertow into defensive oblivion and possible death, choosing life instead.

In the language of our discussion thus far, their respective angels seem to have provided a "larger" story—a matrix of meaning that extended beyond their trauma-bound egos. Jennifer reported that her encounter with the angel had definitely introduced the idea that she was here for a larger purpose. There was some "mission" she hadn't been aware of before and her experience of the sheer beauty of the color Rose Madder helped restore that mytho-poetic matrix (including art) that makes ensouled life possible. This allowed her to choose life, even if this clearly meant more suffering. A larger meaning was glimpsed by both Jennifer and Mr. Bell,

and in the potential space "between the worlds" their respective souls returned. This, at least, is one way to account for the enhanced sense of meaningful aliveness that ensued from their encounters with non-ordinary reality.

The Virgin Mary as guardian angel

A young female incest survivor, in analysis with me for two years, was beginning to recover memories from her third and fourth year of life. Every Sunday, with her mother off at church, her already drunken father would take her from her bedroom into the basement, ritually spank her and then digitally penetrate her vagina while he masturbated. As these anxiety-saturated memories loomed into consciousness, her eyesight would become clouded and the room would start to spin, so we could only explore a little at a time. As this process continued, we realized that these memories were all strangely "from above"—in other words, that a part of her had been dissociated, looking down at her body being violated. One day in a session, I wondered out loud "where" she went during these dissociative episodes. She thought for a moment—then burst into tears and said, very movingly, "I was in the arms of the Blessed Mother." She then told me about the Blessed Mother—always dressed in blue, and how at impossible times in childhood the Blessed Mother had been her inner refuge.

Here, whatever was left of my patient's personal spirit felt a kind of safety and containment that eluded her in her actual life with her real mother. This Blessed Mother was a daimonic figure, numinous, her guardian angel, part of the mytho-poetic psyche's ground of personified "presences." She received my patient's prayers and held her together during times of crisis—a trans-personal container in the absence of a personal one.

Mary and the baby at 25,000 feet

After relating the above story to a group of psychotherapists at an afternoon workshop on trauma, a woman named Katarina approached me at the break and said that my story of the "Blessed Mother" had stimulated a long-forgotten memory of her childhood that she had hardly thought of for years. With her eyes rimmed with tears, she briefly related her story—then e-mailed it to me later. "Dear Dr. Kalsched" her letter began:

> Your words, like the long absent sunshine, melted away another blanket from around my soul. This as you know invited more light, insight, freedom to be mine. It's very liberating and exciting. Thank you! I have told this story only once before, long ago and was amazed then at the rush of feelings and the release that

followed. Most people would find this story unbelievable so I have kept it to myself. Thank you for wanting to hear this and knowing its truth. It has allowed me to feel less alone.

Katarina was born in East Prussia at the start of World War II, with her father off at war and her mother forced by Hitler's war directives to work in a distant town. She and her older brother lived with her maternal grandmother Omi—the only constant figure in her childhood and a very loving person who kept hope alive. Soon her paternal grandmother came and took her brother away. Now her one and only playmate was gone and she and Omi were homeless as the Russian front drew closer every day. Horrid stories of massacres spread like wildfire through East Prussia, so the family fled south to Freiberg.

Three weeks after their arrival, Allied bombs fell on the city. Katarina remembered the whistling bombs, the fires, the smells and screams from the maimed and wounded. Three thousand people died within minutes. Fleeing back to East Prussia as refugees they were chased by Russian ground forces that were emptying towns and villages, killing anything German that moved. Three months later, emaciated, homeless, but alive, they became migrant workers in Bavaria where they could eke out a living in the fields. Katarina was now five years old. The war had ended. All the men in the family were dead or missing. Mother had found work in Munich, where she soon met and married an American soldier. Now Katrina and Omi were alone in a small tranquil village where life could begin again, however unwelcome they were by the Bavarians. But it didn't matter. They had each other. Here is the narrative in her own words:

> Life with Omi was wonderful. The earth was quiet and green. The scent of nature was rich and full of promise and peace. There were no more bombs or gunfire from strafing airplanes or tanks behind us. No more dead animals or people to step over. The cows and goats and chickens and pigs all had plenty to eat in Bavaria. We worked from sunrise to sunset on the farms. I was always at Omi's side. At night she would wake me up to go to the outhouse and tell me how to sneak a drink of milk from the cows. Even then I understood that the reason she woke me was to nourish me. Omi would sing while we picked hops, while we picked potato bugs, while we sewed for the farmers.
>
> Somewhere during this time I heard that my mother went to America with a soldier. A year later I was sent to be with her and this military man. I didn't know either of them. I didn't know this meant leaving Omi forever. But I didn't cry, even though I was terrified. My only prior association with airplanes was that they dropped bombs. My small hands froze on the railing of the metal steps I was supposed to ascend for my trip to America. A man in a

scratchy uniform pried my hands loose and carried me into the military plane. He put me in a small window where I stayed for the duration of the 18 hour flight. I couldn't look at anyone. I looked out the window.

The plane made great roaring noises and pushed me against my seat. I closed my eyes and prepared to die. I did not cry, but I wanted to be with Omi when I died. I wished we had died together in East Prussia. I was not sure where I was when I opened my eyes. But outside my window were clouds and on a great white one with a dome sat Mary and her baby Jesus. I could not stop looking at her for fear that she would go away. She cradled her baby close to her and held his head close to her breast. Mary's robes were light blue and I think the child was in hues of pink.

I don't know how she managed to be outside the airplane in this great white seat of clouds. She was so peaceful and so intent on her child. I could see the love between them. They flew with me all the way – even during the dark night I could see them and thought only of them. I tried not to sleep for fear they would leave me. I was so happy they were there. If I had allowed myself to think of Omi I might have cried and what could anyone do? Nothing. Just like in the war. There was no use in crying for food and warmth when there were none for anyone. The same man that carried me onto the plane pried my hands off the seat and carried me off. I was in America and Mary and Jesus remained somewhere in the heavens where they visited me for a little while.

These images were so real that even today I am certain that it was not a dream or the tail end of a dream. Many years after, when I was a young mother, I saw a statue in a common Hallmark store that riveted me. The posture of the Madonna and child was identical with my visitation. It is now in my creche at Christmas time, sitting in a whirl of cotton. Thank you for wanting to hear this and for knowing it's truth.

Here is a beautiful example of how the psyche, with its benevolent mytho-poetic powers, holds a kind of proxy-image of Katarina's soul, threatened as it was with utter annihilation and overwhelming loneliness during that painful, long night, crossing to a new land. Even as a small child, Katarina knew that there was no human container for her tears—she could not process her trauma with anyone actually present on that plane and she did not want to cry. So on that perilous crossing her soul was temporarily "suspended" outside her body, we might say—held for her in an arresting and beautiful image of love between a human/divine mother and her human/divine child.

Through the gap created by her unbearable pain, a beautiful image appeared to Katrina's visionary and grieving self. This *resonant image*

provided a story, a "matrix" of two worlds that somehow kept her soul in being—or held it for a while until she could create a new story in America that would invite its return once again. The sustaining story/vision was an archetypal story, replacing a much too painful personal one, for the moment. It involved a mother–child unity, a deep imagined attachment in the grief-filled absence of her real beloved Omi, but an attachment nonetheless.

So through the earthquake fault of trauma, we get a glimpse into some mysterious "spiritual" energies and image-processes that fill us with awe and make us wonder. These experiences fit with Jung's conviction that the mytho-poetic contents of our inner world—the dramatis personae of the unconscious—together with their interactions, are not just internalized from outside, but participate in the objective psyche; in other words, they are citizens of two worlds—spiritual and material, collective and personal.

We are left with an important question: Are we *material beings* with occasional intimations of another world of spiritual reality, lying just the other side of the veil? Or are we *spiritual beings,* suffering through a material existence? The question poses a false dichotomy. Clearly we are both. And that is why we attempt to live in that potential space where the true story resides—between the worlds with one eye open, looking out, and one eye closed, looking in.

A mystical experience in Jungian analysis

The following mystical experience of the "world being flooded with light" (Foster, 1985) is noteworthy because it happened to a woman in her thirties, who was at an impasse in her Jungian analysis, and who, having failed to make herself understood by her analyst, decided to terminate the analysis. This rupture in an important relationship seems to have opened her to a profound numinous experience. There are hints that early traumatic losses in her life may have left Genvieve Foster vulnerable to such an upwelling at the time of a later loss. Her fascinating account was published many years later and contains some illuminating speculations that bring us closer to understanding such experiences and their possible relationship to trauma.

Mrs. Foster describes how she had suffered, in early childhood, from the traumatic death of her sister, and then later by the premature death of her first husband after only three years of marriage. She sought analytic help from Dr. Esther Harding of New York, a well-known Jungian analyst at the time. The first few years of their work together were described as very fruitful. With Dr. Harding's help, Mrs. Foster put her life back together, remarried, became the mother of two children, and found work as an English teacher at a local college. She also became very active in the early Jungian community in New York, including the Analytical Psychology Club and related educational groups. The conflicts which began to

emerge in her analysis took place over a number of years and finally reached a pitch of misunderstanding. Here is the way she describes the impasse:

> It seemed to me that certain of my analytic material which had a creative denotation, or a creative content, was being consistently disparaged, shunted aside.... To her it seemed as though what appeared to me as creativity was an "animus delusion," and only by sacrificing this conviction of creativity could I progress in my analysis.... I understood that she was trying to help me subdue my ego to the point where a greater and more important value could emerge. But this was not, for me, the way to do it, and I was resisting.... We didn't quarrel; we both tried earnestly ... but to the extent that I concurred in what I basically knew was a false interpretation, my own personality was narrowed and we were analyzing a hypothetical person, not the real person that I was.
>
> (Foster, 1985: 7–8)

Finally, and reluctantly, Mrs. Foster told her analyst that she was discontinuing her analytic work. It was terribly difficult for her to make this break, and she made it with great anxiety, and without her analyst's understanding or acceptance. As difficult as it was, it seemed essential for her basic integrity as a person to take this step.

Following this separation, Mrs. Foster worked for several intervening years with another analyst who had greater sympathy for her creative work and who she found very helpful. But after a period of time (and after an intervening consultation with Jung himself), she decided to go back to Dr. Harding in hopes of retrieving those positive and negative projections that she had made onto her in the transference earlier. To her regret, this second round was no better than the first, with Dr. Harding again disapproving of the direction in which she was headed. Again, the time came for parting:

> Finally ... I told her for the second time that I was discontinuing my work with her, expressing at the same time my very genuine gratitude for the help she had given me earlier ... I think it was at this time that she threatened me with the prognosis of a breakdown if I stopped my analytic work. She was very intuitive, and it is likely she sensed my unusual closeness to the unconscious at this time, but sensed it only for its negative potential.
>
> (Foster, 1985: 35)

It was not long after this second difficult severance that Mrs. Foster experienced her extraordinary "visitation." The following account is taken directly from her own written account:

> We were living in Wayne and I was teaching at Bryn Mawr. It must have been during the college vacation, because I was at home on a Monday afternoon and the children were not around. I lay down for a nap on the living room sofa.... I had a dream of levitation; I seemed to be suspended in the air a foot or two above the sofa. But my good Jungian training had emphasized the importance of "keeping my feet on the ground," so, still in the dream, I said to myself, "This will never do," and I managed to pull myself back down to the sofa. There was a further fragment of a dream, something about the beating of wings above and around me. Then I woke up.
>
> (Foster, 1985: 42)

> The experience I had then would have been called hallucinatory by a psychiatrist of the day, perhaps by most today. In the technical language of mysticism ... it is called "intellectual vision." ... That is, I saw nothing unusual with my outward eye, but I nevertheless knew that there was someone else in the room with me. A few feet in front of me and a little to the left stood a numinous figure and between us was an interchange, a flood, flowing both ways, of love. There were no words, no sound. There was light everywhere. It was the end of March, and everywhere outdoors shrubs were in flower, and indoors and out, the world was flooded with light, the supernal light that so many of the mystics describe and a few of the poets.
>
> (Foster, 1985: 43)

Mrs. Foster's vision lasted five days! There was no-one around to whom she could describe it. Her husband, who had a bias against religious experience, would have thought her utterly mad. Her analyst had already predicted a psychosis if she left, so she was very worried about herself. All the same, the experience was so powerfully *good* that she could not mistrust it. She knew that she must keep herself well grounded, so she went about all her usual activities, entertaining relatives, going to the movies with her husband, etc., all the while "with that glory blazing all around me" (Foster, 1985: 44).

> So far as I can remember, I slept as usual. I went about my daily business as usual, though I was staggering, metaphorically speaking, from wonder at what was happening to me. I had been an imaginative child from the beginning, and I had had an early training in concealing my inner life from those around me. In the practical sense, my relation to my family was unaffected. I didn't start speaking with them differently ... but I saw them now [and everything else around me] *sub specie eternitatis*, bathed in that supernal light.

> Even now ... life can never return [completely] to its former pattern ... [the vision] altered my life permanently and that value of which I was permitted an awareness in those few days has for me transcended all others....
>
> I knew that I was "companioned" and that the Companion was numinous. After five days the vision faded – but not wholly. I have had ever since an intuitive awareness of being "companioned." That numinous figure is still there, I know, and it is the deficiency of my vision that prevents me from seeing it ... it is there for everyone, I am convinced.
>
> (Foster, 1985: 45–8)

For the year following her numinous vision, Mrs. Foster tried to understand the experience as best she could within her Jungian framework. A letter to her previous analyst, Dr. Harding, brought the expected response that an occurrence of this kind was "not to be trusted." Inquiries to other analysts brought more sympathetic responses but no real understanding. Everyone seemed to feel that her experience was of no particular significance for her personal development—a kind of psychic curiosity—whereas she knew deep inside that it was the most important thing that had ever happened to her. Most helpful at the time were Evelyn Underhill's (1955) classic descriptions of similar mystical experiences, because they helped to normalize what she had seen and felt. Later, she also read an account by Jungian analyst Edward Edinger (1972) about how the central archetype of the Self is often projected onto the analyst and when it is finally withdrawn, may flood back to be confronted within oneself as the central archetype *itself* (see Edinger, 1972: 42).

Expanding upon the notion of the Self or "Other" in a later meditation, Mrs. Foster offers some interesting ideas that are relevant to the theme in this book. Consistent with Jung's ideas about individuation, she theorizes about how the *central archetype* is most likely present from the beginning of life, as witnessed by the many children who report experiences of awe, revelation, or some kind of transcendental state between the ages of three and five (see Borg, 2004; Hart, 2003; Shroder, 1999; Coles, 1990). This central archetype, she suggests, is the "ground of the soul," but is not yet experienced *as something separate in itself*; instead, it is normally projected onto the parents, other significant people, mentors, priests, analysts, etc.

In Foster's view, some of the numinosity of the central archetype separates itself from these projections and casts "a golden sheen" at moments in our fantasy-play as children (Foster, 1985: 58). But mostly, the projection "sticks" to the significant other people or things (including nature herself) upon whom or which we project its image. Slowly, through painful experience, we discover that many of these "objects," no matter how dearly loved, are not fully adequate to the numinous reality of the central archetype we are projecting (such as Mrs. Foster's projection onto her analyst).

This happens frequently in mid-life, as Jung suggested, when we are preparing for the second half of life and ultimately for death. Foster concludes:

> In a vision such as mine ... that central value reveals itself detached from human and material objects, and shining with its own light. When that happens, it assumes the central position in the psyche, and, to use Jung's metaphor again, the ego revolves around it as the earth revolves round the sun. Any work that I did thereafter was done not as a personal achievement, but as an offering to that Other whom I now recognized. There is no longer so much the feeling that I do this and this (I live my life, I pursue my career) as that life lives itself through me.
>
> (Foster, 1985: 47)

Rilke's haunting poem, *No One Lives His Life*, comes to mind:

> Disguised since childhood, haphazardly assembled
> From voices and fears and little pleasures, we come of age as masks.
> Our true face never speaks...
> And yet, though we strain against the deadening grip of daily necessity,
> I sense there is this mystery: All life is being lived.
> Who is living it, then?
> Is it the things themselves, or something waiting inside them,
> Like an un-played melody in a flute?
> Is it the winds blowing over the waters?
> Is it the branches that signal to each other?
> Is it flowers interweaving their fragrances,
> Or streets as they wind through time?
> Is it the animals, warmly moving, or the birds that suddenly rise up?
> Who lives it, then? God, are you the one who is living life?
>
> (Rainer Maria Rilke, 2005)

The remarkable "presences" of this chapter

The projection of the central archetype of the Self and what happens when this projection is broken or withdrawn gives us a way to think about the several experiences reported in this chapter. We might imagine that when the central archetype is projected and carried by an "other" (and this other could be an individual or a group, such as a child's family) a "field" is potentiated—the same field that Winnicott described as "transitional space" with its unacknowledged mystical dimensions. This is that

"potential space" within which ensouled living becomes possible, the space where the vital spark of one's deepest, most essential God-given true self gets an echo from people and things in the outer world, and where the soul is slowly "schooled" by suffering as Keats would say, taking on its own individuality. This process potentiates the "two worlds" that we have been trying to keep in view in these pages—inner/outer, human/divine, temporal/eternal, ego/Self—the two worlds whose dialectic defines the human condition and whose simultaneous presence promotes that coming-into-being that defines healthy living.

Each of the individuals whose experience we report in this chapter experienced something more or less "traumatic" in their lives that effectively interrupted or ended (through dissociation) the natural flow within this "field." In each case we might say that the matrix of true-self emergence was interrupted or compromised. When this happens, it seems that the soul loses its medium between the worlds. With the collapse of "two worlds" the soul is "lost." It leaves the psycho-somatic partnership made possible by transitional space and retreats to the deep unconscious for safe-keeping. It seems to be joined in this retreat by the central archetype itself. Or perhaps the central archetype of the Self and the soul are different aspects of the same transcendent reality.

Each of our cases suffered an injury to the ego–Self axis and a corresponding loss of soul. Yet in each instance, the central archetype appeared in mytho-poetic imagery—a resonant image that kept the soul in being. Suddenly the little girl in our first example was protected from unbearable experience by her guardian angel. Suddenly Jennifer, full of fear and on the verge of death, was given a life-saving choice involving colors, and lived to be an artist. Suddenly Mr. Bell, on the verge of death, was met by "the music of the universe" and was given a choice and reason to live. Suddenly Katarina, at her darkest childhood hour, was companioned by Mary and the baby Jesus on a cloud. Suddenly Genvieve Foster, suffering the feelings of abandonment and disillusionment in her analysis, met a "being of light," felt the flow of love between them, and experienced her whole life being reconfigured by the presence of her "companion" from within and without.

In each case a mytho-poetic image was provided and an implicit "story" to go with it. Not everyone in our pool of examples knew what that story was—at least not yet. Several were afraid to tell their story at all, lest they be thought crazy. But all of them were *encouraged* by their experience, courage that seemed to come from the inner world, when resources for the soul's continued life had all but disappeared from their outer lives.

In the Introduction I suggested that "dissociation seals over non-being." With the wound caused by the psyche's trauma and dissociation, a "basic fault" (Balint, 1979) opens up, but through this fault, the molten lava of the archetypal psyche emerges from inside and plugs the wound with a symbolic "presence." In each of our examples, where the personal story

was interrupted, the archetypal story began. This nourishment from the collective unconscious kept the soul in being, which seems to be the "purpose" of that remarkable psychic intelligence that I have called the *self-care system.* This system seems to embody a kind of overarching wisdom, a dispassionate but supportive overview of the person's whole life, and seems to be interested in the soul's survival and even in its potential fulfillment. Somehow this intelligence saves the soul from annihilation by restoring the mytho-poetic matrix that was ruptured by dissociation. It restores the ego–Self axis from within.

This is not a permanent solution, as we will see in Chapters 3 and 9 of this book, where the benevolent powers of the self-care system turn into malevolent ones. But it provides a glimpse of another world, i.e., a window into our deeper origins. And for this reason it brings meaning where meaning is threatened.

In summary, the preternatural "presences" seen in the examples above seem to fill a gap created when transitional space is foreclosed or compromised. As seen in the above cases, when this potential space collapsed, and with it all semblance of realistic hope with outer objects, inner mediation took over and filled the gap with mytho-poetic presences—mediators—keeping hope alive and providing a mytho-poetic story that provided a necessary medium or matrix for the encumbered soul. Some psychoanalysts might lament the appearance of these "hallucinatory" inner figures as the beginning of narcissistic pathology—the beginning of a split in the psyche engineered by primitive defenses like dissociation and projective identification. This would be correct from a materialistic, reductionist standpoint, but, according to the way we are looking at this material, would constitute only a one-dimensional half-truth.

In my view, psychoanalysis cannot afford this single-eyed vision. The missing element here would be what Jung called the prospective element. Its questions would be "Toward what result are these experiences pointing?" "What are the defenses defending?" And a likely answer to this question would seem to be the human soul.

In closing these reflections, I would like to offer a kind of Gnostic fantasy of the soul's development in human life. This story incorporates some of the material/spiritual experiences that we have brought forward in this chapter and weaves them into a narrative that is as old as the psyche.

It seems that the process of becoming the self you were intended to be (Jung's definition of individuation) involves the materialization of something spiritual. Some seed of true selfhood needs to make a perilous journey through very dangerous territory from the world of eternity to the world of time, from spirit to matter, from divine to human in order to become a human soul. Along the way it will face many trials and suffer great disillusionment and it may never be able to make a full commitment to this hopeful journey if its suffering into reality is too great. It may even be forced to split itself in two, sending part of itself back into the imperishable world

from which it came, to make sure the soul is not annihilated. Sometimes it will be able to return from this dissociation and enter life once again. Along the way, glimpses of the "light" of its origins (and its true companion) may support it in its suffering. And if, through all the brokenness of the human condition, it finds enough of those sunny days when life seems possible ... enough of those resonant images, empathic self-objects (Kohut) and optimal frustrations (Winnicott) that make love worth the sacrifice of omnipotence ... if it makes it to these shores with some of its original divinity intact and not as a false self.... Then, in the language of T.S. Eliot (1971: 59) it will have "arrived where it started, and know the place for the first time."

2

LOSS AND RECOVERY OF THE SOUL-CHILD

> In every adult there lurks a child—an eternal child, something that is becoming, is never completed, and calls for unceasing care, attention and education. That is the part of the human personality which wants to develop and become whole.
>
> (Jung, 1954: para. 286)

In this chapter we will focus on the image of the child as it appears in dreams during the psychotherapy process and will try to provide clinical evidence supporting the idea that this inner "child" often stands symbolically for an affective inner core of the self that is experienced as both innocent (see Chapters 7 and 8) and sacred, and that we have every reason to think of as an image of the human soul. Three clinical vignettes presented in this chapter describe moments in psychotherapy and a series of dreams associated with these moments. In several of these dreams, a lost, imprisoned, or buried child is discovered, or, it turns out, *re-discovered* after a long period of absence or exile. In two of these cases the child motif occurs in relation to an inner animal-image. This pairing of animal and child will be seen often throughout this book and in the collective (mythic) material at the end of this chapter.

Two of these patients spoke metaphorically about feeling that they had "lost their souls"—their spark of life. By this they meant an essential core of their own aliveness—an aliveness that came back to them in therapeutic moments I will try to describe. In each case, dreams of a lost and recovered child or animal occurred after an important relational event, or series of events, between myself and the patient in the ongoing process of their psychotherapy. The return of these dream "children" seemed to herald a renewal of life and was followed by a sense of hope.

In exploring the child motif, it is important to distinguish between the child as a *symbol* in dreams, and the literal child, i.e., the actual childhood of the patient or a literal younger version of the patient appearing in a dream. This distinction is especially important to understanding the deeper meaning of dreams in the clinical situation.

Kathrin Asper, the Swiss Jungian psychoanalyst, in her book *The Inner Child in Dreams*, emphasizes this point:

> From time immemorial, throughout the world, the child has been the bearer of our deepest longings and highest ideals. Holiness, innocence, harmony, happiness, pleasure and joy, peace and eternity, are all equally projected onto the child, and he appears in art, literature, mythology, and religion as a being blessed with all the characteristics of divinity. The child as symbol mirrors not outer reality but rather *the inner reality of the psyche* and reflects the wishes, hopes, and longings to which we aspire. Thus the child becomes a symbol for that which is new and yet to come.... This spiritual level of meaning stands in sharp contrast to the actuality of the child's existence.
>
> (Asper, 1992: 5; emphasis added)

Jung also emphasized that when the child appeared, either in dreams or fantasy material, it represented something more than the literal child. This "something more" came from the collective layer of the unconscious that Jung added underneath the personal unconscious in his model of the psyche. From this collective layer came the mythic or "spiritual" qualities that attended the appearance of the child.

> It may not be superfluous to point out that lay prejudice is always inclined to identify the child motif with the concrete experience "child," as though the real child were the cause and pre-condition of the existence of the child motif. In psychological reality, however, the empirical idea "child" is only the means ... by which to express a psychic fact that cannot be formulated more exactly. Hence by the same token the mythological idea of the child is emphatically not a copy of the empirical child ... not—and this is the point—a human child.
>
> (Jung, 1949: 161)

Jung made his discovery of the more-than-human child in his own dreams during the dark time after his break with Freud, when he was writing nightly in his journal in an effort to hold himself together. This was a despairing time for Jung and his inner world was bleak. At first, apocalyptic visions broke through into his day-world and filled him with dread. Then, slowly, his struggle was rewarded by some of the positive, life-enhancing energies of that *other world* known to him earlier as his No. 2 personality. At the center of these emerging dreams and fantasies, Jung met a child—a child that he recognized as an image of his own soul. We will explore this story at greater length in Chapter 8.

In Jung's later mature writings he wrote extensively about the image motif of the child, especially in his essay *The Psychology of the Child Archetype* (Jung, 1949). Here, Jung develops his idea that the miraculous "divine child" is the germ of wholeness in the personality—the prefiguration of the God-image in the individuation process, and that the typical themes about the child's birth and struggles point in this direction:

> Sometimes the child looks more like a child god, sometimes more like a young hero. Common to both types is the miraculous birth and the adversities of early childhood—abandonment and danger through persecution. The various child fates may be regarded as illustrating the kind of psychic events that occur in the entelechy or genesis of the "self." The "miraculous birth" tries to depict the way in which this genesis is experienced. Since it is a psychic genesis, everything must happen non-empirically, e.g., by means of a virgin birth, or by miraculous conception.... The motifs of "insignificance," exposure, abandonment, danger, etc. try to show how precarious is the psychic possibility of wholeness, that is, the enormous difficulties to be met with in attaining this "highest good."
>
> (Jung, 1949; paras. 281–2)

> It is a striking paradox in all child myths that the "child" is on the one hand delivered helpless into the power of terrible enemies and in continual danger of extinction, while on the other he possesses powers far exceeding those of ordinary humanity. This is closely related to the psychological fact that though the child may be "insignificant," unknown, a "mere child" he is also divine.... [Because of these superior powers] and despite all dangers, the "child" will unexpectedly pull through.
>
> (Jung, 1949: para. 289)

In the last part of this chapter we will cite several examples from world mythology that illustrate these themes—especially the theme of the child and his/her "terrible enemies." This will prepare the way for Chapter 3, in which we encounter the ultimate antagonist of the child and everything he/she represents. These mythologems provide support for the fact that the fate of the inner child and what he carries or represents in the psyche is a major preoccupation of human cultures the world over, including our own. They also show that the self-care system, whose role is to keep this soul-child out of suffering-in-reality, and hence dissociated from consciousness, is a formidable resistance to the child's life in this world.

The child between the worlds: D.W. Winnicott's transitional space

As Jung demonstrated, the child—as symbol—is the child suspended between two worlds, one material, one spiritual, one inner, one outer; and this dual aspect of the child is part of what marks him or her as a symbol for that paradoxical unity or wholeness that we associate with full aliveness and therefore with the human soul. The writings of D.W. Winnicott are full of descriptions of the paradoxical "potential space" that the actual child must negotiate in his transition from infantile omnipotence to the reality principle. Although Winnicott does not refer explicitly to the soul, or to the child as *symbol*, he does speak about a "true self" which, as a concept, he says "collects together the details of the experience of aliveness" (Winnicott, 1960a: 148). And he states explicitly that "at the centre of each person is an incommunicado element, and this is sacred and most worthy of preservation" (Winnicott, 1963a: 187).

In the photograph in Figure 2.1, we see a child poised between two worlds—gravity pulling him down, the bounce of the mattress elevating him up toward the ceiling. The camera captures him at this weightless moment of pure exultation and playful aliveness. We can imagine his squeal of joy and excitement. The poetic inscription by Paul Eluard says "there's another world but it's in this one" and we have a sense that this child knows, in the moment captured by this photograph, the co-incidence or "co-inherence" of these two worlds, and the magic that floods into the potential space where they meet. To experience this liminal area, which is neither one world nor the other, but both, is to touch that mysterious "third" thing that is the very essence of ensouled living.

Winnicott loved to paraphrase the poet Rabindranath Tagore, whose poem *On the Seashore* captures the magic of a liminal world:

> On the seashores of endless worlds, children meet.
> The infinite sky is motionless overhead and the restless water is boisterous.
> On the seashore of endless worlds the children meet with shouts and dances
> ...Children have their play on the seashore of [endless] worlds.
> (Tagore, 1913: 3)

The seashore, like transitional space, defines an area between the water and the land that unites two opposite realities in a third area that participates in both, yet transcends them. The foamy tongues of waves wash upon the beach and children run into the shallow water with their plastic pails and shovels to play. But then there's something more. This "more" is something ineffable and mysterious hiding in Winnicott's otherwise scientific theory of healthy child development. According to the poet, this

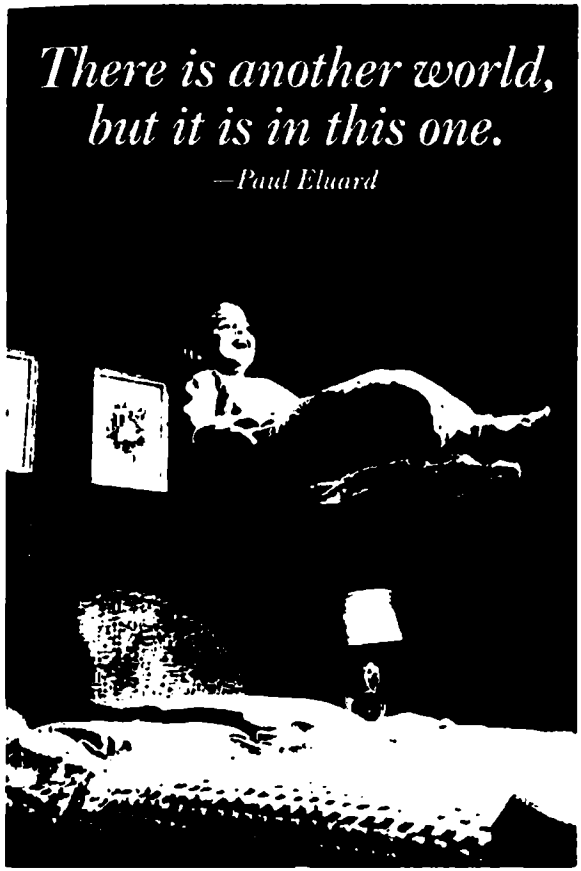


Figure 2.1 The child between the worlds.

magical meeting of sand and water occurs in "endless worlds." Between the "infinite sky" above and the "restless water" below there's a space where not only sea and sand meet and mingle, but finite and infinite, eternity and time, also meet. The co-existence of these otherwise incommensurable worlds is what makes the space so alive and dynamic.

Honoring this mystery, Michael Eigen (1981) refers to an "area of faith" in personality development, by which he means a transitional way of experiencing, undertaken with one's whole being (as the first Commandment says) with all one's heart, with all one's soul, and with all one's might. Other investigators have also attributed spiritual qualities to this space between the worlds—however these worlds are conceived. Jung said that we come to this third space through the "transcendent function" (Jung, 1916: 67–91) and he further claimed that the soul itself occupies an intermediate position "between the subject and the inaccessible depths of the

unconscious," being both a receiver (from another world) and a transmitter (to this one) (Jung, 1921: para. 425, p. 251); Thomas Ogden speaks mysteriously about the "analytic third" as a creation of the analyst and analysand, while at the same time, "the analyst and analysand ... are created by the analytic third" (Ogden, 1994: 93). And James Grotstein refers to the act of dreaming itself as a dialogue between an "ineffable subject of the unconscious" and the "phenomenal subject" of the conscious personality (see Grotstein, 2000: 12–13).

So to enter this "space" of aliveness where the two worlds meet is to enter a spiritual–material matrix where both the soul and the child seem to belong. If we say, with Tagore and Winnicott, that "on the seashores of endless worlds children play," we might also say

> on the seashores of endless worlds, the soul comes to presence (indwells) through the evolving life of a child at play, free to live with his whole being, all out, with all [his] heart, with all [his] soul, and with all [his] might.

Both the indwelling soul and the quintessentially alive child, therefore occupy that potential space *between the worlds.* It is this correspondence between child and soul that seems to account for the fact that, in dreams, the child can be said to symbolize the soul or to represent a symbolic *carrier* of that spiritual substance we refer to as the soul.

When trauma occurs in a child's life, one of the most tragic results is the *foreclosure of transitional space.* This means that the soul can no longer remain present in the mytho-poetic matrix between the worlds—can no longer "indwell," at least temporarily. But this is not the end of the matter. Many experiences in life re-open transitional space. As psychotherapy begins, for example, transitional space is often reconstituted in the relationship with the therapist. After what may have been a period of depression, the patient begins to hope and dream again. As the imagination is opened again, the two worlds we have described are potentiated. It is as though the child is a spark that jumps across a synapse created by the proximity of these two worlds as they come to presence through relationship. The following case vignette illustrates how this happens in a vivid dream.

First case: baby in a cage

An attractive middle-aged woman with a private and significant poetic sensibility came to see me after a period of mild but persistent depression. Two of her three children were now "out of the nest," and she wondered what she was going to do with the rest of her life, having spent so many years as a devoted mother and homemaker. She had always felt an affinity with Jung's psychology and its orientation to trans-personal meaning, and

a friend had told her that she would make a good psychotherapist herself. Knowing that this would require further analysis, she decided to come and see me.

Our early explorations together uncovered a painful early relationship with her mother, whose controlling nature and imperious, short-tempered cynical attitude often made her childhood-self "feel like dirt." Meanwhile her father rarely stood up for his daughter against his wife's negativity.

As the patient and I began to explore her personal life history and she began to feel some of the long-repressed emotion held inside her, she began to dream regularly. Her first dream said volumes about what lay ahead in her analysis:

> I'm with a group of mothers and children visiting a new pet store which is now somehow part of the old drug store in town. As I make my way up and down the aisles with cages containing little puppies, I suddenly stop dead in my tracks. There's a baby in one of the cages! This is horrifying! The baby has huge brown eyes and brown hair and looks at me.... It looks so sad! Then it curls into the fetal position. The poor baby! I'm so upset by this that I leave the store and go about my business, trying not to think about it. I express my outrage to the other mothers, but I don't feel the confidence to confront the store owner with my feelings—although I want to.

This first glimpse of a lost and caged child brought an instinctive upwelling of emotion in my patient and with it the awareness that a younger and precious part of herself had been forced into captivity much earlier in her life and had not been able to grow along with the rest of her. As her analytic work progressed, there were many appearances of this dream-child or similar figures represented by dream-animals. These human and animal images were soul-carriers for my patient's inner life—the spontaneous aliveness inside her that had been forced into an encapsulated state in her unconscious. As our relationship strengthened and we attended to the spontaneous process of her dreams, the child or animal imagery grew stronger, ultimately becoming integrated into her mature self and forming the basis of a renewed sense of aliveness and vitality.

Comment

Loss of the soul/child almost always accompanies emotionally traumatic events in a person's life. There was no single traumatic experience in this woman's history. Instead, her trauma was an accumulation of painful emotional experiences—mismatches and attachment derailments with the mother who she needed to help her gain confidence in her own feelings and perceptions. When this kind of cumulative trauma occurs in a child's

life, the transitional space we have been discussing—the space through which the child is "becoming," is partially foreclosed by a division we call dissociation. The child—a symbolic carrier of the animated soul's life—is pushed back (by the psyche's defenses) from between the worlds where it was alive and at play, into the unconscious where it is trapped and imprisoned—in this case by the unknown store owner, representing the controlling aspects of her self-care system. The result was "loss of soul." If trauma is to be healed, the potential aliveness locked up with this inner child will have to be touched and quickened by the therapy process. This happened for my patient as transitional space was restored in the warmth and neutrality of our analytic relationship.

My patient was upset by her own passivity in this dream—"going about her business and trying not to think about it." She realized that she would have to make a choice now. Otherwise she would just drift. Her choice would mean a commitment to her inner life with its imprisoned child. This would also mean having to confront the store owner, i.e., her own repressive defenses. After a struggle she made this choice and committed to many years of her own analytic work and training. In the language of Neville Symington (1993), she chose the *lifegiver.*

Second case: stockbroker and the buried child

A Wall Street stockbroker in his late twenties (who I will call "Richard") consulted me for depression, sleeplessness, and various psychosomatic symptoms after his fiancée broke their engagement and left him for another man—someone who was "less boring," she told him. Richard was understandably shaken by this, but seemed more stunned than sad, and he had very little access to his feelings. But through his shy embarrassment in the initial consultation, I thought I saw—or felt—a young boy in him that I wanted to reach.

In response to his fiancée's betrayal, my patient felt not only the usual feelings of grief and anger, but began to feel desolate, unreal, disconnected, and "dead inside." These feelings of de-personalization and de-realization would give way occasionally to spasmodic bouts of weeping, but Richard said that he didn't really know what he was crying about and his tears brought little relief. He missed his fiancée, but his tears felt disconnected from her and seemed to come from "another place." They frightened him and made him feel "pathetic." As I listened to his story, I wondered what early traumatic experience might have been kindled or triggered by the current abandonment by his girlfriend. Eventually, we found out what this early trauma might have been.

After an initial period of psychotherapy focusing on his lost relationship, we began to explore his personal history. He couldn't remember much from his childhood, which had been "boringly normal, typically middle-class," except for one thing. He never felt he really belonged in his

family and the fantasy persisted that he might have been adopted. He felt there was something secret in his past, some dark other life he must have lived. He had even checked his birth records and consulted his one remaining parent (his father) with these ideas, but his father, a miner from Pennsylvania, found his questions annoying and dismissed them as "nonsense" and went back to his football game.

I asked about his mother's death, thinking that perhaps this might provide a clue. She had died of cancer several years prior to our first meeting. Her death, he said, had been "uneventful"—like everything else in his life, except the relationship with his fiancée. He hadn't felt much. No-one seemed to feel very much. The church service had been hollow. No-one spoke except the minister and he got her life all wrong. Robert didn't miss his mother. They hadn't been close.

Further exploration of his childhood history led nowhere and it wasn't long before Robert began to get as bored with his analysis as he was with his life. While his acute panic and feelings of de-personalization had abated somewhat, his depression continued—even deepened—and his work performance began to suffer. He was taking medication but this didn't seem to help much. There were no dreams. His responses to my inquiries were often monosyllabic, and as the weeks went by I began to feel some version of what his fiancée might have felt in my countertransference reactions—a feeling of helplessness and an impulse to withdraw from him.

Richard began to complain that we weren't getting anywhere and I had to agree. As his depression deepened, I considered referring him to a colleague, but I felt that to have done so would have amounted to an enactment of my growing discomfort with our impasse. I would have been colluding with the "repetition compulsion" through which his earlier abandonment complex was engineering a withdrawal by me.

The therapy became uncomfortable for both of us. He didn't really want to be there and I began to dread the hours. We went along like this for a couple of months, speaking about his work, his daily obsessions, and worries about losing his job, etc.—more and more superficial material.

Finally, at one point, I made a special effort to engage my disengaged patient. I leaned forward and said something like this:

> Look, Richard, I know this is difficult. You came here for relief and your depression is even worse now. I feel like I'm failing you as your therapist, and I don't want that to happen. Everybody's withdrawn from you it seems. I don't want to be another one! We'd miss an opportunity to really understand what happened when you were a little boy. So I want us to redouble our efforts. Are you with me in this?

After making a joke about whether I had some "truth serum" for him Richard immediately reassured me that it wasn't my fault—*I* wasn't failing

him, *he* was just not a very exciting patient. But I wanted to stay with this subject of having failed him. "What if I was?" I asked him,

> What if that was my role to fail you ... just like everybody else has? What if that was our little drama together, written by your unconscious. But what if we could find a way out of that script—find a different way to end the play.

Richard looked puzzled. He didn't really "know" what I was talking about. But he *felt* something because his eyes rimmed with tears. "Sure," he said, "of course, but you'll have to help me ... you know me Doc, I'm half brain dead when it comes to my childhood."

And on that note we began a much more interesting, engaged, and relational phase of Robert's therapy. We thought of this phase as mutual "detective work"—looking for his missing life, especially his missing *feeling life.* I began to "slow him down" in the hours, to focus attention on his body and what he was feeling in the moment. This was extremely awkward for him but slowly he started to feel things more deeply.

In addition to a more "here and now" focus, we began to try everything we could think of to help open up his childhood memories. On my suggestion, he started a journal and kept his thoughts, feelings, and dreams in it, making one entry every day, no matter what. He brought in pictures from a family album and we spent time together, side by side on my couch, in conversation about them. He sought out the only childhood friend he could still remember and he went back to his natal home and visited the house where the family used to live, prior to his mother's death. He wandered around on the property and made notes.

He found two living aunts and uncles and collected whatever photographs they had of him and his family. From his mother's younger sister (who had been his favorite aunt) he discovered that his mother had suffered a post-partum depression after his birth and had been hospitalized for six weeks! He had been sent to live with this aunt, who reported that she returned him to his mother gradually, over a period of a whole year because his mother remained depressed and unable to cope. Each time the aunt tried to give little Richard back to her sister, she'd collapse in depression. The boy would lose weight and she would take him back again for a month or so. This information was a shock to Richard and gave us an immediate clue to the early trauma being repeated in my patient's current fear that his fiancée might leave him. He was, in effect, re-living his lost attachment to the aunt and before that to his mother who, because of her depression, had neglected him emotionally.

A short time later, my patient reported his first dream—a disturbing one about being trapped in a dark space with no way out. The dream reminded him of a repetitive nightmare he had had as a boy (another recent memory), which made him afraid to go to sleep. In the childhood

nightmare he found himself inside the kitchen garbage can which was kept in the basement in a locked cupboard, a place to which he had been banished by his mother when he was "bad." She used to lock him in there for some "quiet time." This place was always terrifying to him. It smelled of garbage and he was afraid of the cockroaches and spiders. In response to my continual questions, he now remembered that he would sometimes scream and cry so hard in this locked closet that he would "go blank." He called it his "crying closet."

Hoping that this recent dream and its triggering of the early repetitive nightmare would give us access to some of this split-off affect, I asked my patient to close his eyes, observe his breathing, and re-enter the dream, telling me what he saw and felt. At first he resisted this, but by now he knew how I worked with dreams and we had a good trusting rapport in which he felt safe. As I always did, I reassured Richard that he could come "up" out of his inward focus at any time. With these safety measures, he was able to let himself down into the dream-image. The place in which he found himself was a hall of horrors, a melange of distorted images of half-human beings and ghoulish apparitions. I asked him to stay with these images and tell me anything that came to him—especially what he felt in his body. He said he felt very small and scared. "I'm starting to freak out," he said. "This is too much!" So I asked him to open his eyes, re-established contact in the room, and tried to stimulate his curiosity about what he had just experienced. We talked for a while. He felt safer again.

A great sadness came over him, and then, during the tender moments that followed, I mentioned how discarded and unwanted, and thrown-away he must have felt in his family as a little boy. Hearing these words, he burst into tears. With my help he allowed himself to drop into these tears and not pinch them off. His crying went on for several minutes. These tears differed from his earlier spasms of weeping. He was now crying about a sad reality of his early life. Finally, he reorganized, then left the session very shaken but also deeply moved. That night he recorded the following vivid dream in his journal, the first "big dream" of his therapy. He read it to me excitedly at the next session:

> I'm walking along a desolate sandy beach. I'm younger, I don't know how young. In the distance is a woman I've met before. She is wearing a white Terry-cloth robe with a hood. She looks ethereal, vaguely other-worldly. Not even her face is visible. A storm is brewing. We see a lump in the sand. She points to it, indicating she wants me to dig it up. I do, and discover the live body of a little boy. First I dig the sand out over his torso, so he can sit up. He is also wearing a long white robe and hood. His face is still under sand. I try to clear it, but the sand keeps falling back covering his eyes. Only his forehead and chin are exposed. Finally I get him out and the three of us walk down the beach together.

> Suddenly we notice a dolphin jumping in the water. Soon it doubles and becomes two, then four, then eight ... until the ocean is alive with these animals. As we watch this sight from a lifeguard tower, a strong wind comes and blows us over backwards.

This interesting dream seemed very strange to my patient, except he knew it had something to do with the prior session which, he said, had "blown him over." He felt that digging up the body of the boy must have something to do with digging up his past and with the memory of his "crying closet." He thought the hooded woman was his mother because he recalled seeing her in such a beach robe in one of the pictures we had shared. He thought the sand in the boy's eyes was like trying to wake up from sleep when the "sandman" puts "sleep" in your eyes. As for the dolphins, he hadn't a clue, except that he had always liked their playfulness and the way they jumped and spun in the air.

The dream starts in a "desolate" situation and ends with a numinous image of aliveness. In between these two self-states is the digging up of a buried child—an event that clearly brings life into the dream scene. It seemed to me that Richard's dream was a direct commentary on our previous session and now his associations enriched this meaning significantly.

Having been emotionally abandoned long ago, something inside him had been buried, remaining hooded and unavailable—faceless. This boy represented his missing life, the pre-traumatic, fully alive child whose energy had left him (through dissociation) on the occasions of actual or emotional abandonment and terror in his "crying closet" and at other despairing times in relation to his mother (including his first six weeks without her!). As such, this hooded child might represent the lost and now returning part of the patient's own whole, animated self—his vital spark—his soul. The woman who points to the lump in the sand is also hooded—an indication that she and the child are linked in their unconsciousness—they cannot see or be seen clearly, until now. In reviewing this material, I could not help but think of the passage in I Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then, face to face." (*The Holy Bible*, 1956: 170)

As Richard tried to uncover the face of this boy in his dream, the sand kept falling back over his face—a reference, I thought, to the traumatic trance that this inner child had been under. The "sandman" representing his self-care defenses had covered him over and now wanted to keep him covered, representing the defensive system's repression of the new life now threatening to enliven his deadened existence.

Richard was excited about this dream and the breakthrough of feeling in the prior hour. We spent several sessions going over his feelings and filling in missing details of his history around these dreaded punishments.

A new playfulness came into our dialogue. He began to feel grateful that I had "stuck with him." I no longer felt I was failing him, and I had the feeling we were re-writing his old "script." Richard's depression lifted considerably and he began to sleep better. Further dreams followed and they were also important in directing us back to various secrets in his past family life. Slowly his mood lifted, his work improved, and he began to date again.

I met Richard when I was in training at the C.G. Jung Institute in New York in the late 1970s. Shortly after he and I had processed his "dolphin dream," I happened upon a passage in Jung's essay (1949) on the *Child Archetype* which had been assigned for one of my classes. In this essay Jung is discussing the various forms in which this universal image of the child emerges in world literature and mythology, often referring to a *new beginning*. In the relevant passage, Jung comments on the image of the "hooded one":

> Faust, after his death, is received as a boy into the "choir of blessed youths." I do not know whether Goethe was referring, with this peculiar idea, to the cupids on antique gravestones. It is not unthinkable. The figure of the cucallatus points to the hooded, that is, the invisible one, the genius of the departed, who reappears in the child-like frolics of a new life, surrounded by the sea-forms of dolphins and tritons.
>
> (Jung, 1949: 177)

This imagery corresponds almost exactly with the imagery of my patient's dream, supporting the fact that archetypal realities from the collective psyche are alive and well in modern men and women. It was as though a part of him, invisible until now, long since departed and buried, the "genius" or animating spirit of his departed self, is made known again through the mediating attention of a similarly hooded female figure (Mother? Caretaker self? Guardian angel?), an inner figure with apparent knowledge of what is buried. The meeting takes place on the seashore, reminding us of Tagore's poem and of the life that is potentiated in transitional space, between the worlds.

Our interpretation of this dream is further supported if we look into the archetypal significance of the dolphin—in other words, if we *amplify* the image. Amplification was a technique Jung used when he encountered collective material in dreams. It is rather like gathering the free associations of the entire cultural canon to a particular image—mythology, religious iconography, folk lore, literature, etc.

The mythic association of the dolphin with new life following a "death" is, according to Graves (1955: 291–3) very old. For example, in one Greek myth Arion, son of Poseidon and master of the lyre, is condemned to death by a group of sailors who are covetous of his wealth. After singing

his last song, Arion jumps overboard and is presumed dead. But a dolphin carries him ahead of the ship to Corinth where—after a royal welcome—he confronts his would-be executioners who are then put to death themselves.

Similar stories abound (see Tripp, 1970: 62). A dolphin reportedly rescued Enalus when in despair he jumped overboard to join his sweetheart in the depths. The dolphin's mate rescued his sweetheart. Another dolphin saved Phalanthus from drowning on his way to Italy, and finally, no less than the great Apollo, looking for a likely spot to establish his oracle, jumped on board a Cretan ship disguised as a huge dolphin and led the astounded sailors to Delphi. There he revealed himself and commanded them to establish a shrine of Apollo Delphinius ("He of the Dolphin"), appointing them keepers of his oracle.

Further association between the dolphin, rebirth, and the "child" is found in Pausanias, who reports that a supposedly part-divine, part-human child named Taras, son of Poseidon and Satyraea, was the dolphin-riding New Year Child of the Dorian city of Tarentum. From other evidence in Pausanias Graves (1955: 291–2) finds it likely that the ritual advent of the New Year Child was dramatically presented at Corinth with the aid of a tame dolphin trained by the sun-priests which the child actually rode into the sanctuary in a canal system built for this purpose.

This archetypal imagery gives us a glimpse of the life-saving function of the archetypal psyche when life cannot continue "on the surface." A child is buried and preserved—invisible and hooded—until this lost heart of the self, heretofore kept out of the suffering of life, re-enters the life-stream once again, surrounded in his dream by leaping and playful dolphins, which have always been associated with vitality, animation, and the return of light to the world.

Figure 2.2 shows an ancient sculpture of a dolphin and its child rider, representing some of the mythic material just cited. This sculpture from the first or second century BCE emphasizes the coincidence of these two themes, child and dolphin, both of which connote new life or rebirth. As if to support the idea that these images have to do with the emergence of renewed vitality in the psyche, the rider is none other than Eros himself, the archetypal image of psychic libido or desire. This theme recurs often in sculptures and relief carvings all over the Mediterranean basin from Egypt to Syria, from Carthage to Pompei (see Glueck, 1965: 30–7).

That a contemporary patient, a businessman and stockbroker who was completely unaware of these ancient symbolic parallels, should dream of a recovered hooded child in connection with leaping dolphins is about as dramatic an example of what Jung meant by the archaic and typical (archetypal) components of the deep unconscious as could ever be imagined. It offers compelling evidence that the work we do in modern psychotherapy in the "upper register" of relationship evokes deep chords, resonant with mytho-poetic meaning, from *within* the psyche at the same time.

Figure 2.2 First-century Roman statue of Eros riding a dolphin.

My patient was not much interested in these mythological parallels, which—despite my better analytic judgment—I excitedly spilled out to him in my youthful enthusiasm for the uncanny parallels between his dream and the ancient mythological material. At one point I remember he said to me, "I can see you're really excited by these mythological parallels, Doc ... but when am I gonna find a new girlfriend?"

Humor aside, Richard was, nonetheless, deeply moved by a sense that he was somehow being reunited with a lost part of himself through the analytic exploration of his personal life history. He felt grateful for our work together. His life no longer felt quite so desolate but somehow meaningfully stormy. His access to feelings increased. He soon found a new

girlfriend and left his therapy for a new life, leaving me with his beautiful dream and its symbolic richness, together with his permission to use it.

Comment

In retrospect, I think Richard and I went through a process of relational rupture and repair that is fairly typical of work with early-trauma patients, where the early material cannot be remembered but, owing to dissociation, must be *repeated*, this time hopefully toward a new ending. After a good start, an impasse was reached in the treatment which was troubling to both of us. This impasse was a place of mutual dissociation. He felt empty, cut-off, and "dead" and said he was no longer "getting anything out of our work together." He thought this was his fault. I felt equally helpless and bored, like I was failing him, and I wanted to withdraw from the relationship so as not to suffer the pain of these feelings. People withdrawing from him was his presenting problem (starting with his mother, ending with his fiancée), so clearly we were about to "enact" the relational form of his early dissociation.

The late Paul Russell, supervising psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School, described this tendency to repeat a past trauma in the following way:

> Suppose you have been working with someone over a reasonable period of time. You and the patient know enough about each other to have done some useful work [and to know] that the relationship holds the promise of growth. But inevitably woven into that growth will be something like the following: a series of dreams, or some memories, or some triggering events, or perhaps nothing in particular one can point to, will herald an emerging feeling that, as it unfolds, carries with it the charge of an invitation to injury. The relationship becomes clouded, dense, murky, and somehow interpreted in a different way.... The patient feels that before anything else can happen, it has to be decided, right now, whether you, the therapist, are or are not somehow participating in, or creating, a fresh version of a familiar injury.
>
> (Russell, 1999: 29–30)

Russell then describes how the patient seems to require something "more" from the therapist, more than the usual "evenly hovering attention" or interpretive activity with which the therapist is comfortable. The therapist faces a dilemma. To provide the something additional feels crazy. And yet not to do something runs the risk of injury to the treatment relationship.

The crisis in our therapy—the place where Richard's injury might have been repeated—was the moment when (out of frustration at constantly failing him) I *wanted* to withdraw from him, but didn't. Cut off from his

inner feeling-life and devoid of memories, he was failing again to "interest" his partner (me) and he would not have blamed me if I had referred him or ended our work altogether. By articulating my own feelings of failing him, and re-claiming him for our work together, we managed to avoid repeating the earlier trauma and together "re-set" the relationship in a growth-full direction. In the language of Daniel Stern, together we "re-wrote the past." Stern says:

> If past experiences are to be changed, they must be rewritten or replaced by a new temporal experience occurring in the same time framework. The rewriting must also be lived through with its own temporal dynamics. [It can't just be an abstracted experience in language] – once-removed from direct experience, short-circuiting its temporal flow. Such new temporal experience re-writes not only the explicit past, but also the implicit experienced past.
>
> (Stern, 2004: 220)

What happened between Richard and me was well described by Stern as a genuine "moment of meeting." Such a moment, he says "implicitly reorganizes the intersubjective field so that it becomes more coherent, and the two people sense an opening up of the relationship, which permits them to explore new areas together implicitly and explicitly" (Stern, 2004: 220). But such moments of meeting also constitute something more than a moment *in relationship*, as Richard's remarkable dream demonstrates. The inner world also opened up, for both of us. He not only met something new from me. He also met something new inside himself. Our new experience *in relationship* brought a buried child and leaping dolphins out of his unconscious in a dream. These symbols of his liberated energy confirmed *the birth of new life inside him and the return of his soul.* I also was "re-animated" by his material.

Stern's way of saying this is that in "moments of meeting" a transcendent dimension (*kairos*) intersects what is otherwise a one-dimensional linear progression of time (*chronos*). *Kairos*, he says, is a "coming into being of a new state of things ... a moment of opportunity that escapes or transcends the passage of linear time" (Stern, 2004: 7). Clearly something mystical is intimated by Stern's language describing this intersection.

Between me and Richard, we could say that something from *another dimension* flooded into the space we created within the inter-subjective field. Two worlds came together and the soul returned (indwelling) to its rightful embodied place at the center of Richard's emotional life.

Third case: Dellie and the pony

"Dellie" was an artist who had lived most of her life, she said, in two worlds. First there was the walk-around world of reality, social relations, school,

marriage, and family. To all outward appearance, she excelled in this world. She was bright, attractive, an outstanding athlete, a good student, and an imaginative and talented artist. Everything looked so good on the surface. So why, she wondered, was she so unhappy, so perennially "homesick?"

She knew the answer to this question lay partly in the fact that she also lived, simultaneously, in a second world. She hadn't chosen this second world. She had been driven there by repeated emotional injuries in her family, especially in relationship to her very narcissistic mother who was always passing her off to one nanny or another. "No, you don't really feel that way," her mother would say. "You can't be hungry, I just ate!" "Stop being such a crybaby!" etc. Slowly a great divide began to open up in Dellie's psyche, one part of her, with its smoldering hurt and shameful neediness, disappearing into an inner sanctum of safety while another part—tough, funny, and unfeeling—carried on as best it could, conforming to what everyone seemed to want of her, surviving but not really living.

Her second, inner world provided a much-needed alternative to her outer life—a private, melancholy place where she felt more or less "safe" from the inevitable injuries that occurred when she tried to bring her worlds together by expressing what she felt. In this alternative world, she was at home in nature, with her painting, with her animals, and in the intellectual world of philosophy and theology where her "project" was to figure out the ancient problem of theodicy: How could a loving God allow such suffering in the lives of his faithful?

Straddling her two worlds, Dellie would have known exactly what Jung meant by his No. 1 and No. 2 personalities, No. 2 being, in Jung's own words:

> skeptical, mistrustful, remote from the world of men, but close to nature, the earth, the sun, the moon, the weather, all living creatures, and above all close to the night, to dreams, and to whatever "God" worked directly in him.
>
> (Jung, 1963: 45)

Dellie was the third child and only girl, with two older brothers who teased and tormented her regularly in the family's already impoverished emotional environment. Preceding her birth there had been a stillborn baby girl whom the mother idealized, continually lamenting her loss in front of Dellie, leaving her living daughter as a "replacement child" with the impossible task of somehow helping her unhappy mother to be happy again. In this way Dellie's otherwise healthy growing self was purloined by the mother's narcissism and the mother's own inner "stillborn" child.

One memory of Dellie's early life with her mother stood out. She was on the beach, aged three, and was enthusiastically playing with some mechanical toy (a sandcrank?) which flew apart and struck her mother in

the head. The scene that followed was terrifying and shaming, the final insult coming when her mother, in a rage, abandoned her daughter on the beach and ran home, subsequently refusing to speak to her or to make up with Dellie for days afterwards.

"Something changed" at that moment, Dellie reported. "I started to become very very compliant, very very good, protecting myself from my mother and protecting my mother from myself."

The natural result of this kind of early derailment of a child's spontaneous expressiveness toward her primary attachment figure is a division within the psyche between a regressed, needy, spontaneous self carrying its burden of shame on the one hand, and a pseudo-mature "progressed" self that strives to be loved through compliance, and by "doing well" on the other. Dellie tried her best to "save" her mother by being "good," which meant *not* needy, *not* a bother, and *not* a source of unhappiness as the disappointing "replacement" for the mother's idealized, lovable, stillborn daughter. But lacking the consistent maternal love that would have made her strong internally, she became an insecure, clingy child, painfully ashamed of her own neediness which the "progressed" part of her inwardly began to hate. A cycle of need, followed by shame, began. At the age of three she remembers pleading with her mother not to leave her at nursery school, pleading not to be left at home alone with her older brothers, pleading not to have to get on the school bus that would take her to kindergarten at age five, pleading not to be sent to boarding school a few years later.

One of the paradoxes of her childhood was how perennially homesick she felt whenever she was separated from her family. She could never figure this out. She was full of this nameless longing for home, but there was never any "home" there when she arrived. Later she realized that it was her lost soul that couldn't find a home with her narcissistic mother.

As the parents' drinking and violence toward each other escalated and as they disappeared more and more into their golf- and tennis-club life, Dellie became more and more anxious about showing emotion of any kind. She stopped needing anyone. If she cried she was told "Look, if you're going to make a scene, take it outside until you get a hold of yourself ... then put a smile on your face and come back to the table." So Dellie would go out behind the garage near the woodpile and cry by herself. That was during the early years when she could still cry. She could also draw and read. Teachers in kindergarten saw how bright she was and gave her books. She especially loved horse stories.

Then one day, around the age of six or seven, there seems to have been one final tragic rupture. The family was going on a short vacation to Washington, but Dellie discovered to her horror that she was about to be left home with the nanny. To make matters worse, her best friend in the neighborhood—also a friend of one of her older brothers—had been invited to go along. She felt completely undone by this. She remembers

crying inconsolably in a heap on the floor. She remembers how her mother stepped over her in disgust on the way out the door without saying goodbye. She felt terribly ashamed.

That week, something miraculous and ineffable happened. She had left the house and was out behind the garage crying, when a beautiful little Shetland Pony came to her. As the days progressed, the Pony became her more-than-real "imaginary companion." She would put her arm imaginally around the Pony's neck and the Pony would nuzzle her. Then she would pour out all her feeling in an emotional but wordless communication, because the Pony understood everything without her having to say it. She remembers such love between herself and the Pony and how safe and reassured she felt when he came to her. She also recalls the feeling that with her special friend she would never need anybody or anything in the "real" world ever again.

Dellie survived the desolate, emotionless atmosphere of her family thanks to the Pony, her deep connection to nature, and her growing inner life. But then as she approached puberty around ten or 11, her gang of pubescent girl-friends began to pull her away from her childhood world. A voice in her head kept asking "Are you gonna be a grownup or not?" She began to feel conflicted about the Pony. Around this time she had a poignant dream which she remembered very vividly and the grief in this dream preoccupied her for much of her adolescence.

> Dream: The Pony and I were having this great time playing in a brilliant green meadow. Afterwards, I led the Pony down into a town which was all white ... the buildings were white, the streets ... the trees, everything. I stop in front of a large building which is a Church or a School. I have to go into this building ... I don't know why ... but the playful time with the Pony can't go on inside. I knew what I had to do. The Pony wasn't allowed inside. I knew that meant leaving my friend. It was a terrible moment. Then I turned away and went into the Church. I never saw the Pony again.

This dream marked a threshold in Dellie's evolving self-experience. If before she had been in pain—sometimes unbearable pain, alternating with the joy of her imaginative world with its special soul-animal—now she felt vaguely "above it all," abstracted, dispassionate, observing everything with a kind of intellectual curiosity, disconnected from all the pathos and innocent suffering and pleasure of the Pony's world which now, she started to believe, was morbid and infantile.

But as she grew into her teen years, Dellie realized that she was really cut-off from other people and from her feeling self. Although she was a talented athlete and popular among the kids, she could never understand why she felt so alienated and separate. Inside she felt stained with some

nameless sense of badness and damage—a fraud of a person, disconnected. By the time she got to college, her inner division had become self-destructive. She had an eating disorder and would starve herself so badly that once she had to be hospitalized. She was increasingly afraid of going mad and she started to have dreams in which God and the Devil were fighting for her soul.

She wrote furiously in her journal in order to hold herself together while her two personalities grew further and further apart. Finally, she ended up in a psychiatric hospital but she was only patched up there and never healed. Upon discharge she found a therapist and thus managed to find a somewhat tenuous foothold in the world. During this time, her writing, study, and art work were a Godsend and essential islands of sanity on which she felt real. There were other islands of sanity—church, her early relationship with the man she married, her children—a few friendships in which she could become at least partially real. But, now in her forties, she was desperate again. The old anorexic pattern had restarted and she knew she needed help.

On the night before her first analytic session, she was sitting in a small fellowship group at church, feeling desperate, spaced out, and alienated, with the old homesick feeling, when a voice clear as day said to her: "I never left YOU ... you know." She knew immediately that it was the Pony and her old dream came back to her. She felt deeply moved, and in that very moment she committed herself to an analytic process, knowing it had to be a Jungian analyst, because Jung was the only psychoanalyst who spoke openly of the soul. She knew instinctively that her Pony was her soul-animal and that she had been separated from her soul for many years, living in the white city of her mind, devoid of feeling—successful, popular, with straight As and a "reputation" but unable to feel her own affects, half-dead inside and full of some nameless guilt for having betrayed and forsaken her own innocence by becoming what other people wanted her to be.

We might think of the Pony as an imaginal container for Dellie's childhood pain—at least while she could still experience it privately and before she had split off into the white city of her mind. In the presence of the Pony she was closer to her affects and therefore to her body. The Pony held her innocent suffering which she dared not expose. When she left the Pony at 11 and entered the white church, the split between mind and body had grown. She was now much farther from her feelings and the anorexic rigidity of her self-care system became more established.

After several years of depth psychotherapy, Dellie began to descend into her feelings and into her alive body, and the vehicle for this descent was a strong love she felt for me in the transference ... a love I felt for her too. It was as though the special rapport Dellie had previously enjoyed with her special animal friend could now be experienced in a human relationship between the two of us. Yet there was a great thornbush that

surrounded this tender love. The slightest sign of my unavailability, distraction, or failure to match her feelings in a fully mutual way could send her back into psychological retreat. There were many difficult times in which our fragile attachment threatened to come apart altogether. The pride and stubbornness of her self-care system were amazing to both of us.

After one especially difficult struggle between us around my anticipated summer vacation, where we succeeded in repairing an attachment-rupture, Dellie dreamed:

> I finally felt that Don felt about me as I feel about him. There was a warm and good feeling between us. He was holding my hand and I was holding the hand of a young girl. Suddenly there was this holy feeling that flooded the space.

This "holy feeling," I would propose, is a signifier for the fact that the space "between the worlds" had been potentiated after a period during which it had been frozen or foreclosed. This is the transitional space where the "child" lives and to which the soul returns during those moments of healing which are a part of any transformative human relationship. We need a language of the sacred to account for such moments. Purely "inter-personal" explanations are necessary but not sufficient to this task.

Much of the best work Dellie and I did during this middle phase was with her dreams. They provided a mytho-poetic matrix in which her true story could be told and that tremulous, shy core of herself could enter the potential space between us. During this time, Dellie had many dreams in which the division in herself between two worlds was apparent. The following dream was important because it hints at "where" the Pony went after the dream of the white church, and it also gave us an image of something in the psyche that witnesses this division—maybe even arranges it. This "something" in the background, Marie Louise von Franz calls the "dream-maker" (von Franz, 1991). The "dream-maker" seems to provide images of the original split as the healing process is initiated.

Here is the dream Dellie had four years into her psychotherapy as she began to make sense of her life in a new way:

> Dream: Robert Redford, the actor, comes to the town where I grew up. He sits alone along the right side of the highway by the Golf and Tennis Club my parents belonged to. He has come here to watch as all the mustangs eat their children. It's really the mothers eating their daughters, because the "mothers" (the mares) will not allow their fillies to get treated like this. Down in the valley I can see what's happening. The mustang/mothers are huge and white. They are charging and killing their children with their flailing hooves ... then eating them. It goes on for a long time and is terrible to witness. I realize that this terrible carnage is

> only happening here. Out West the young horses are free. Here the environment is totally unnatural to the horses and it's not endurable. What the mustangs are doing is an act of love. So sad and so violent. I am overcome with horror and compassion.

Dellie and I knew this dream had something to do with a deep early division inside her between her Pony-self—the little girl who cried so many tears—and another part of her that killed and devoured these pony-selves because "here" (on the grounds of the golf and tennis club where she spent her weekends as a child) no genuine expression of her inner life was possible and the ponies were mistreated. This dream is a powerful evocation of the violence necessary to repress the true self when the conditions for its growth are missing, or worse.

This insight reminded Dellie of a poem she had written in graduate school which made the same point:

> Inside a lake where the face still floats.
> I am her caretaker, the only one who really loved her
> When she was so small, hardly able to walk
> And the grownups turned their solid backs to her—
> I had to watch her trying to swim, watch her drowning—
> And before I knew, a steady hand reached out and held her under.
> My own hand, to save her.

With the help of her dream and the earlier poem, Dellie realized that at some point along the path of her development, she had foresworn what Neville Symington calls the *lifegiver.* She had done this out of some innate mare-like instinct that the vulnerability of her soul (the Pony/child) needed the protection of being forced out of this world—repressed, eaten, killed. And yet this splitting occurred for a reason—in order to preserve any chance of future growth under better conditions that might be found. Now that Dellie was experiencing those better conditions she could begin to "see" what she had done to herself—or rather what the self-care system had done to herself.

This new insight had something to do with the arrival of the Robert Redford character in the mustang dream. He was "watching" the horrific scene below, standing back dispassionately, like someone filming the scene but not involved on a feeling level. Dellie knew this attitude within herself and she wondered if perhaps the "Watcher" came into being at the same time she and the Pony were separated when she was 11. She had always been aware of this as a precocious "wisdom" and maturity in herself that was sometimes uncanny in what it could see. She somehow knew things other people didn't and she could even "see" things that were happening to herself, although she couldn't do anything about it.

This wiser part of her knew something was terribly wrong. "It knew I was a phony," she reported.

> "What are you doing that for?" it would say. It was so negative! All it could do was point out something negative. It couldn't acknowledge hurt or underlying dynamics, but it could smell phoniness everywhere and it was scathingly cynical and negative.

"And yet the Watcher must have known the Pony was missing," said Dellie, "and so must have had something to do with bringing him back. 'He' seemed to have knowledge of the split without being a part of the split. When part of the self splits off, the Watcher seems to emerge," Dellie surmised.

This idea of a Watcher or Witness in the psyche is extremely interesting and harkens back to Ferenczi's discovery of "Orpha" in his patients' dreams and fantasy material—a supremely wise, dispassionate, yet compassionate aspect of the whole self. Many clinicians working with dissociative identity disorder patients—especially using hypnosis—have found a witnessing part of the psyche that is subjectively experienced as a person. It has been called the Inner Self Helper (ISH), the Guide, or the "hidden observer" (Hilgard, 1977). Usually this figure is benign and apparently seeks to help integration and coherence. It seems that trauma ruptures something in the psyche but also initiates a kind of consciousness. According to Dellie, "I was watching myself pretending to be in my life and other people were believing me ... such inauthenticity!"

Bonnie Badenoch (2008) confirms the extraordinary wisdom and seemingly transcendent aspect of the "Watcher." She says:

> Watchers appear to encourage the inner protectors to step out of the way so that therapist and patient can journey into the deeper mind. This process [seems to be activated] in response to the neuroception of safety. Some of my patients have told me about very tangible watchers, often without us having discussed the likelihood of such a presence. One watcher took on the symbolic shape of Robin Hood pacing on a high wall, seeming to be half-watcher, half-protector. Others have been a yellow bird in a sandplay tree, a mysterious fox, a quiet angel, a pair of enormous eyes.... From what I can gather, the capacity for some kind of watching presence appears to be standard equipment in the psyche, but then can be impacted by relational events in the environment.... A number of my patients report feeling this watching presence from very early in life, sometimes in the first year, before an age when we would expect there to be the possibility of explicit memory, much less the neural integration required to experience a caring observer state of mind. This anecdotal evidence suggests that there is more to be discovered.
>
> (Badenoch, 2008: 85)

The experience of being "known" or "seen" by an apparent wisdom or intelligence in the unconscious is a common experience for patients in Jungian analysis, where devoted attention is paid to dreams. Jung was perhaps the first twentieth-century theorist to give this experience full weight in his theory of the psyche. He called the ostensibly "supra-ordinate" source of this uncanny wisdom the *Self* as a center of experience and subjectivity prior to the ego. As Dellie said, "something stays intact, even when the ego splits in two."

Comment

In this brief vignette, the image of a child first appears as the little girl whose hand Dellie is holding (as I hold her hand in her dream), and in her poem as the child she drowns in order to save it. The child image is also implicit in the image of the dream-colts that are killed and eaten by the compassionate/murdering mares. The Pony seems to be one of these colts, the object of the patient's wordless love and communication with the Pony-as-object. In this sense the Pony is a kind of soul-carrier for the childhood Dellie, a guardian angel, similar in many respects to the more explicit angel that appeared to Jennifer and others in Chapter 1. Over the course of Dellie's analysis, there were many dreams of the actual lost soul/child hiding inside herself. Characteristic of her animated imagination, however, the child-content would just as often appear in her dreams as a small and vulnerable animal, frequently as a rabbit.

Dellie's dramatic dream of the compassionate killing of the ponies by the mares is a striking example of the self-care system in operation. The dream makes it clear that this system was only necessary within the environment of the country club where Dellie spent weekends as a child while her parents socialized. "Out West" this system wasn't needed and the ponies were "free." By contrast the "Country Club" was a place where Dellie's poetic and artistic interior life could not survive, and the merciful killing in her dream is a dramatic example of how the psyche tries to cope with this impossible situation. The result is loss of soul. Hence Dellie's continual homesickness.

As a sensitive child, Dellie could not emotionally survive in the coldness of her actual family. Her special Pony provided a mytho-poetic companion to help hold the impossible pain that she felt. The Pony was an inner reality but yet it was also real. To paraphrase Winnicott, we would never ask Dellie whether she found the Pony "out there" or had created it from "in here," because the Pony occupied that intermediate space between the worlds in which we are all most alive. The Pony helped her live in a world that was unlivable—and then eventually became livable again.

The lost and recovered child in world mythology

In the Introduction to this book, I quoted John Keats, who said our world was a "vale of soul-making" and described how "sparks of the divine radiance" which he called "intelligences" are slowly "schooled" by reality and become human souls. This idea that we all carry in our innermost selves a sacred core of potential wholeness or aliveness or creativity and that this radiant center wants to unfold and realize itself through the particularities of our unique individual lives, is the first part of a two-stage drama that this book attempts to illustrate. This unfolding tendency, conspiring toward the full realization of one's personhood, is often represented as a child or sometimes as an animal or other living being. Often this child has something sacred or divine about it, revealing its miraculous, life-renewing nature, and the fact that it was born "between the worlds"—part divine, part human.

Then there's a second "act" to the play, so to speak—namely, the idea that trauma interrupts this unfolding of the personality by foreclosing the transitional space through which the vital spark is actualized and that this interruption of human development can trigger a system in the psyche that attacks and tries to "kill" the emerging child. As I have pointed out elsewhere, this effort to "kill" the soul/child is not usually an effort to annihilate it altogether (which would constitute soul murder and maybe literal death), but to eliminate consciousness of it, and actually, in the final analysis, to save it. Instead of annihilation, we see in dreams that the child has gone into exile—we would say into the unconscious—where it lives in suspended animation until some future time when it can re-emerge.

In the following paragraphs I would like to give additional examples of this two-part theme from the collective "dream" of humankind, namely mythology. The work of collecting together the relevant myths that portray this theme of the miraculous child and the malevolent forces arrayed against him has already been done for us by Otto Rank, who was Sigmund Freud's assistant and then became an analyst himself, eventually breaking with the master and setting out his own theory of symbolism and art. His celebrated monograph *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (Rank, 2008) collects over 70 examples of such myths. Among these, five essential constituents were identified.

1 The infant is born to noble or divine parents or is the issue of a deity and an earthly maiden, sometimes a virgin. His origin is preceded by difficulties such as prolonged barrenness in the parents or depression in the community.
2 The "extraordinary signs and prophecies" attending the pregnancy or the infant's birth arouse the anxiety of the ruling king or of the infant's father, who sets out to kill or banish him.

3 The infant is "exposed" to die or is surrendered to the sea in a basket or is sent away or escapes owing to the intervention of benevolent forces that intervene. Sometimes this is the infant's mother. Sometimes miraculous warnings come through dreams.
4 The infant is rescued—sometimes by animals or by a humble woman or by a fisherman and brought up in another land.
5 The hero, now a youth, returns to either overthrow the father or renew the community through his leadership.

Rank's interpretation of these themes is entirely in keeping with Freud's theory of the Oedipal rivalry, childish wish fulfillment, and childhood sexuality, and need not concern us here. Two of the following three myths (Jesus and Perseus) are chosen from among the 15 summarized by Rank and abridged to bring out relevant themes. The third (Zeus) is taken from Jane Harrison's summary of Hesiod's account. All of them contain the major constituents cited by Rank above and are representative of the basic motif we are exploring, i.e., the "child" with a dual (human and divine) destiny, born between two worlds whose life is threatened by the "powers" of the existing realm of secular ego-authority. In all cases defenses are necessary to protect the sacred child and in all cases these defenses have a *daimonic* quality, i.e., they get their life-saving power from non-ordinary means, such as oracles or dreams.

Infant Jesus and King Herod

The Gospel according to Luke (1:26–35) relates the prophecy of Jesus' miraculous birth in the following (abridged) story. The angel Gabriel is sent from God to a virgin, engaged to be married to a man named Joseph. The angel informs Mary that she shall conceive and bring forth a son who shall be a great man and shall be called the Son of the Highest. When Mary inquires how this can happen, given that she has not "known a man" the angel tells her about the coming *immaculate conception*:

> "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."
>
> (Luke 1:35)

Soon the half-human, half-divine infant Jesus is born. The birth occurs in the lowly surroundings of a manger, among farm animals, but brings the "glory of the Lord" (Luke 2:9–20) down upon the surrounding shepherds and a shining star over his birthplace shows the wise men of the East how to find him (Matthew 2:1–12). Joseph Campbell (1981: 32–4) reminds us that this association of star and light with the birth of the divine child is age-old. Even the date assigned to Christ's birth (December 25) was

originally the birth date of the Persian savior Mithra who, as an incarnation of eternal light, was born on what was thought to be the exact moment (midnight) of the sun's return from its winter retreat into darkness.

Reports of the miraculous birth and of the prophecies surrounding the child of his destiny as King of the Jews reach King Herod, who (representing the authoritarian "old order") is sorely troubled, lest his power be usurped by the new wonder child. He sends the three wise men to report on the child's whereabouts so he can come and worship also (Matthew 2:8), but the wise men, warned in a dream of his malevolent intentions (here we see the cooperation of *daimonic* powers), depart via another way. Joseph, too, is warned in a dream by the angel of the Lord, saying:

> Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.
>
> (Matthew 2:13)

The flight into Egypt is an example of the protection required if the child's life is to have a chance to grow under the threat of the violent patriarch. This theme is known among folklorists as the *infant exile motif* and has been documented from every quarter of the earth. The story tells us why this protection is required:

> Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under.
>
> (Matthew 2:16)

Some years later, when Herod was dead, the angel of the Lord returned to Joseph and reassured him that it was safe for him to return to the land of Israel. The Holy couple then brought the young boy back to Nazareth in Galilee, where he grew up as the carpenter's son. His special powers do not emerge until much later—for example, when he impresses the learned doctors with his understanding in the Temple at age twelve (Luke, 2:47).

Baby Zeus and child-devouring Chronos

In Figure 2.3 we see an image from the Greco-Roman era in which the shield-bearing warrior protectors known as "Kouretes" dance around the baby Zeus, who is threatened by his cannibalistic father Kronos. On the floor next to baby Zeus is his winged *Thrysos*—a staff entwined with ivy, vine leaves, or ribbons, symbolizing gaity and whirling ecstasy, the life force itself. Its wings were thought to signify transcendence, expressing the

Figure 2.3 Kouretes dancing around the infant Zeus.

divinity of Zeus who was born of the Titans Rhea and Kronos but then overthrew his father and the rest of the Titans and ascended to his divinity on Mt. Olympus as God of both sky and earth.

According to the accounts in Hesiod, Zeus' father Kronos was warned that his son would overthrow him—hence the child was in mortal danger, as Kronos was in the habit of devouring his children one by one as soon as they were born (see Goya's grisly image of this in Plate 3). According to the story, Kronos had already devoured Zeus' five older siblings. However, as soon as Rhea delivered the infant Zeus, she fled to a cave with the child, hid him, and substituted a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes, which the father ate instead.

Doing her utmost to save the child, Rhea enlisted the help of the Kouretes. According to the account in Strabo (see Harrison, 1974: ch. 1) they surrounded the child clashing their spears against their shields and with shouting and wild dancing tried to drown the noise of Zeus' wailing lest the ravenous Kronos hear it from far off. Eventually the child was given over to them to be reared. The Kouretes were understood to be not just human but *daimonic* dancers and protectors with extraordinary benevolent and healing powers. An ancient ritual hymn commemorating the birth of the infant Zeus tells the story: "For here the shielded Nurturers took thee, a child immortal, from Rhea, and with noise of beating feet hid thee away" (Harrison, 1974: 13).

Eventually Zeus avenges the deaths of his five previous siblings by inducing Kronos to vomit them up. Then he and his Titan brothers and sisters kill Kronos and overthrow the Titans, liberating the world from their destructiveness and establishing a new order of Olympian gods.

Perseus and the angry King Acrisius[1]

Acrisius, the king of Argos, had reached an advanced age without having a male heir. He consulted the Delphic Oracle, and was told that his beautiful daughter Danae would bear a son through whose hand he would perish. Terrified by the prophecy, and to forestall this fate, he had Danae locked up in a carefully constructed bronze tower, away from mortal men and guarded by savage dogs. But despite these precautions, Zeus came to her in disguise and penetrated through the roof in the form of a golden shower. Hence, Danae became the mother of a "divine child," Perseus.

One day the old king heard the voice of young Perseus coming from his daughter's room. Betrayed, but unable to kill his own daughter, he took both Danae and her young son to the sea, enclosed them in a box and cast them into the waves. The box was carried by the sea to the island of Seriphos, where a fisherman named Dictys netted it, hauled it ashore and found both Danae and her son inside. He took them to his brother, King Polydectes, who made them part of his family.

However, Polydectes became enamored of the beautiful Danae and as Perseus, now a man, tried to defend his mother, Polydectes tried to get rid of him by sending him on an impossible errand—to fetch the head of the Gorgon Medusa. But thwarting the king's anticipations and with the help of Athena and Hermes, Perseus performed this difficult task and a number of heroic deeds besides. Returning with the severed head of the Medusa, he dumped it onto the table in front of Polydectes, turning him and his court to stone. He later gave the head to Athena, who fixed it on her Aegis. Perseus then became the king of Argos, and the builder of Mycenae.

Comment and reflections on the role of aggression in these stories

In all of these examples we see how the child "born between the worlds"—i.e., part-divine, part-human—is perceived as a threat to the "old order"—the king or the patriarchy in its most authoritarian form—representing the destructiveness of what I have called the self-care system and its defensive, fear- and envy-ridden repudiation of new life.

Over the years of my clinical practice I have observed how, repeatedly, this tyrannical "system" seems to take over the personality after trauma interrupts the normal developmental process through which the inner child might evolve into a healthy ego. The system constitutes an archetypal defense against new life and the urge toward individuation that the child

represents. In other words it is an *anti-individuation factor*, functioning like an autoimmune disease in the body—attacking healthy tissue in the mistaken perception that this healthy tissue is foreign, dangerous, and bad. We will come back to this dark theme in the next chapter when we explore the destructive work of another old king—the king of the underworld himself, as pictured in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

While Jung gives eloquent and clinically relevant descriptions of the child motif and its meaning, when it comes to the "murderous patriarchy" so commonly paired with this child in the mythological accounts, he strangely misses what I feel is a crucial issue. What he misses is that the violent affect portrayed in these motifs represents the in-turned aggression of a *defensive process* that inevitably threatens new life within the psyche after traumatic beginnings. In short, he misses the idea that the post-traumatic psyche includes *a violent pathological (anti-life)* force that becomes a resistance to healing.

Strangely bypassing the ubiquitous role of primitive defenses in psychological life, Jung interprets the murderous themes in terms of his overall compensation model of the psyche, according to which new life is always threatened by an opposite pull toward "death" from the unconscious.

> Out of this situation the "child" emerges ... threatened on the one hand by the negative attitude of the conscious mind and on the other by the *horror vacui* of the unconscious, which is quite ready to swallow up all its progeny, since it produces them only in play, and destruction is an inescapable part of its play.
>
> (Jung, 1949: 168)

Here we would want to emphasize that aggression surrounding the child motif is much more than the "play of the unconscious." To call the repeated violence and malevolence in this material "the *horror vacui* of the unconscious" minimizes the universal role of willful destructiveness in the psyche as it is bound up inside a defensive system, and fails to understand how this destructiveness finds its way into the self-care system through traumatic events in a child's early life. It also leads away from an understanding of how this destructiveness enters human relationships in general, and how it can ultimately be transformed. If destruction is simply an "inescapable part of the play of the unconscious," then its relationship to actual ego experience—including emotional trauma—is missed.

This, it seems to me, is a major lacuna in Jung's thought and one which reflects his relative neglect of the role of both aggression and defense in psychological life and development. These latter ideas are at the center of our field today. There is accumulating evidence for the establishment of early defenses in infant observation and attachment studies and central to these studies are discoveries that emphasize an early split in the traumatized child between libido and aggression. With this traumatic splitting,

aggression that should be available to the child to protect itself against its persecutors is diverted back into the inner world to attack the very vulnerability that threatens the "old order" of control. As Fairbairn (1981: 114–15) says, the child, unable to express either its neediness or its rage, "uses a maximum of its aggression to subdue a maximum of its libidinal need."

This research clearly links the early traumatic experiences of infancy with *archetypal* affects employed as defenses, especially primitive rage and aggression.

The intimate relationship between early trauma and self-inflicted violence of archetypal proportions (including the defense of dissociation) is one of the most important discoveries of contemporary psychoanalysis and developmental psychology. Among other things, these discoveries lead us *toward an interpersonal, contextual, and developmental understanding of the origins of human evil and destructiveness.* At least we must include these traumatic *environmental* factors and the pathology that follows them as part of our "archetypal" story of evil. Otherwise we are left with things like Jung's (1936) analysis of the Nazi phenomenon representing the eruption of the Wotan archetype, or Hillman's explanation of Adolph Hitler's evil as deriving not from outer trauma (Hitler was repeatedly beaten into unconsciousness as a boy), but from a "bad seed" unfolding from within (Hillman, 1996: 215ff.).

I think these "archetypal explanations" of violence and aggression in certain personalities are an unfortunate development in Jungian theory—maybe even a dangerous one—and lead us into a dead end. No doubt there is *nature* in self-formation—the unfolding of archetypal potentials, the divine inheritance, the personal daimon—but there is also *nurture* and our theory becomes irrelevant if we don't include it. Even worse, in cases of early trauma and the severe psychopathology that follows it, our theory becomes clinically useless.

But we cannot fault Jung for not knowing the results of infant observation studies of the last three decades. And the lacuna in Jung's understanding of defenses and defensive aggression should not deter us from recognizing the enormous contribution he has made to our understanding of the child motif in dreams and mythological material. Jung's remarkable essay *The Psychology of the Child Archetype* remains, to my way of thinking, one of the most beautiful and poignant essays ever written on the real and imaginal child. Summarizing his findings, Jung writes:

> The archetype of the child has to do with the wonder of all beginnings and the wonder of all beginning again. We are led by it to imagine being in the world as on the first day of creation, seeing the world for the first time. The "child" is born out of the womb of the unconscious, begotten out of the depths of human nature, or rather out of living Nature herself. It is a personification of vital

> forces quite outside the limited range of our conscious mind; of ways and possibilities of which our one-sided conscious mind knows nothing; a wholeness which embraces the very depths of Nature. It represents the strongest, the most ineluctable urge in every being, namely the urge to realize itself.
>
> (Jung, 1949: 170)

What Jung does not say is that this child, so worthy of preservation as a representative of the human soul and its aliveness, can be permanently exiled by defensive processes and the anti-life forces that get established in the psyche after early childhood trauma. When this happens the soul goes into hiding, and its "urge to realize itself" may be all but extinguished.

Fortunately we are beginning to better understand how to work with those defenses and resistances that threaten the very core of the self. As we do so, through the stormy process that usually ensues, we can expect to see the "child" returning once again to the "space between the worlds."

3

DISSOCIATION AND THE DARK SIDE OF THE DEFENSIVE SYSTEM

Dante's encounter with "Dis" in the Inferno

The false God turns suffering into violence
The true God turns violence into suffering
Simone Weil (1987: 65)

Introduction

This is a book about trauma and the soul and in the previous chapters we have explored a sophisticated system of defenses that often comes to the rescue of an innocent core of the self after trauma erupts in a person's life. We discovered this innocent core, often represented as a child, by following the dreams of individuals with a trauma history as they engaged the transformative process of psychotherapy and revisited some of their early, unremembered pain. As we witnessed in the previous two chapters, the inner forces that seem to gather around a child's early traumatic wounding are sometimes personified in dreams as protective figures with seemingly benevolent powers—angelic beings like Ferenczi's "Orpha" with surprising integrative energies, benign presences of light with a reassuring perspective, or trance-inducing powers that seem to block the child's consciousness of some unbearable experience.

In this chapter we will look at the other, darker side—the persecutory powers marshaled by the defensive system, and we will do so with special reference to one of the classic literary portrayals in Western literature of the netherworld in which "they" live—Dante's description of Hell in the *Inferno*, which is the first book of his great trilogy, the *Divine Comedy* (1978). Dante's poem is an apt resource for the archetypal side of this exploration because the first third of his poem involves an imaginal descent into Hell in search of the root cause of the poet's suffering. The violent and persecutory landscape of Dante's Hell, with its terrifying dark Lord ruling from the pit, provides us with a vivid portrayal of the defense-dominated inner world of trauma as our patients frequently describe the paranoid/persecutory landscape of their own private "hells." In this chapter we will be looking at the overall structure of Dante's *Inferno* and

the dynamics of its imprisoning powers and their victims as an archetypal image of the life-saving/life-denying pathological organization that I have described as the self-care system. Sometimes defenses have survival value. Sometimes they keep us in Hell forever.

Dante's guided journey into this netherworld—descending one level at a time—is not unlike the psychoanalytic adventure, and gives us some useful imagery of the elemental and powerful forces at work "underneath" the inter-subjective process of analytic psychotherapy.[1] This is a world into which the analytic "pilgrim" will have to descend with his guide (therapist) in order to unearth the fragments of his unremembered pain that have been haunting him from within—those dissociated self-states that are so infused with pain that they cannot be remembered. They are frozen in what neuropsychologists call "implicit memories."

Here he will confront the persecuting powers portrayed in Dante's netherworld—the devils, demons, fiendish monsters, and "fallen angels" of this dark realm. These diabolical entities seem the opposite of those protective agencies described in Chapters 1 and 2 but, as we will see, they are merely the other (aggressive) side of these powers. In my clinical experience, the negative personifications in the unconscious of trauma survivors often start out protective. But in a trauma-saturated childhood, with no opportunities for repair or relief, their activities become more and more aggressive as defensive splitting continues unabated. Recent literature on multiple personality disorder supports this de-evolutionary tendency. For example, persecutory alter-personalities almost always begin as protectors in early childhood, but during adolescence, when anger and disillusionment mount in the trauma survivor, they become violent and persecutory (see Goodman and Peters, 1995: 92).

Of all Dante's demons, one in particular will occupy us in this chapter. He was originally God's greatest angel—the light-bearer—none other than the radiant Lucifer himself. But in his fall he has become the opposite of light, i.e., the Dark Lord, responsible for the imprisonment and torture of all those innocent or guilty souls who have fallen into his lair. Imaged by Dante as a frightening three-headed monster who chews up and devours three sinners at a time (see Figure 3.1 by the Pisan master of 1385) the poet's name for this penultimate demon is not Lucifer or Beelzebub or Satan as we might expect, but "Dis," from the Latin, meaning to divide or negate.[2]

Dante's poetic insight that the violent monster at the center of Hell is psychologically equivalent to the dis-integrating energies of the "other world" (unconscious) helps us to relate the poem's medieval Christian imagery to the clinical situation where we are very familiar with "Dis" as *dissociation*, dissociative identity disorder (DID), *dis*avowal, *dis*connection, *dis*ease, even *dis*aster, which means to become separated from your stars. Trauma is just such a disaster and the loss of one's guiding star is equivalent to the loss of one's soul or God-given spirit—one's true, spontaneous self.

Figure 3.1 Three-headed Dis devouring sinners Brutus, Cassius, and Judas.

Dis' mythic origin as a fallen angel has some interesting implications for understanding his role in the trauma survivor's defensive system. According to the account recorded in several ancient Jewish Apocryphal books found in the Qumran caves, Dis (Lucifer) was the first rebel angel. He broke away from the Godhead because he refused to go along with God's plan to enter human history as a man (incarnation in Christ). Here is Alan Watts' (1954: 41–3) engaging summary of this archetypal event:

> Among the angels which God had created, by far the most beautiful was an angel named Lucifer, the Bearer of Light. One day Lucifer looked into the heart of the Holy Trinity, to try and divine what God was planning for him and as his gaze went deeper and

deeper into that abyss of light, he saw something which completely dismayed and disgusted him. Of all things, he saw that God was planning to come down into the world and take on the incarnate body of a man—a man with fleshly and hairy body—almost an animal. Worst of all, he saw that God planned to set one of these vile bodies upon the very throne of heaven.

At all this Lucifer was inflamed with a mystery called Malice. He could not countenance God's "corrupting himself" with the body of a human animal and so he resolved to have no part in such an undignified aberration in the otherwise beautiful scheme of creation.

Along with Lucifer, there were many other angels who felt the same way—and all together, with Lucifer at their head, they turned their backs on the Beatific Vision, flying and falling from the Godhead towards that ever-receding twilight where Being borders upon Nothing, to the Outer Darkness. It was thus that they put themselves in the service of Nothing rather than the service of Being, and so became the nihilists who were to do their utmost to frustrate the creative handiwork of God. In this manner a whole host of angels became devils, and their prince became Satan, the Adversary and Beelzebub, the Lord of Flies.

This account is an interesting mytho-poetic description of how a splitting defense comes into being—as a prideful refusal to embody. The body is our container for affects. The nihilistic anti-life "force," personified here as the fallen Lucifer or Dis, resists what Winnicott calls "indwelling." As we have seen, trauma interrupts indwelling and the normal descent of the radiant light-bearing soul into the body is compromised. A split opens up between "bad" (shame-ridden) affects in the body and "good," perfectionistic thoughts in the mind. Heaven and Hell are thus created in the infant's inner world and mediation between them fails.

Another way to think about this is that the primal affects of infancy are unmediated by the mother, who fails in her mediating role of "introducing and re-introducing the baby's body and psyche to each other" (Winnicott, 1970: 271), thus giving rise to unbearable pain and anxiety. Dis emerges to make sure this unbearable affect is not experienced. He *refuses* embodiment. Affect is split from image, body from mind, innocence from experience. Life goes on in compartments. But when healing begins and the unbearable memories of psychic pain—now encoded in somatic representation and represented symbolically as the "child"—re-emerge to be integrated, Dis appears as a powerful mental factor of repression and resistance.

The inner child that Dis loves and hates usually carries the split-off affects in the body—affects that are now removed from consciousness and encapsulated in what Jung calls the "somatic unconscious" (Jung, 1988: 441–4). Dis seems to direct his aggression and contempt at this child

because he desperately wants to keep this child *out of further suffering in reality*, suffering which has almost "killed" this child in the past (and therefore killed him too). To avoid this (to him) disastrous consequence, he creates a world of suffering—an inner Hell—with himself as the relentless, tyrannical "voice" within. This dis-integration creates a world of repetitive suffering that is chronic rather than acute and is thus preferred by the fragile ego.

All the suffering instigated by Dis is to avoid another kind of suffering, a more productive kind of suffering which might lead out of the ingrown, closed circle of Hell. As Helen Luke (1995: 60) once stated, "true suffering belongs to innocence, not guilt," i.e., it is only when the innocent core of the dis-integrated self is allowed to suffer that the imprisoning enclave of Hell is broken open. Until his powers are lessened through inner and/or outer acceptance, Dis remains the "God who turns all suffering into violence." We will see toward the end of this chapter that the repetitive, addictive, neurotic suffering of Hell gives way to the directed, meaningful, authentic suffering that greets Dante and his guide as they enter the *Purgatorio*. This will give us a chance to discuss these two forms of suffering as they relate to the clinical situation.

Dis and aggression

The total nihilism of Dis—the fact that he is the great nay-sayer in the psyche—seems related to the aggressive energies that are necessarily directed back into the inner world after trauma ruptures the child's flow of experience. A child who is violated and violated again and again over time develops tremendous anger that it cannot express to its persecutors. Instead, this aggression is directed back into the inner world toward the neediness that the child repeatedly feels, but must repeatedly repress. When harnessed by the defensive system, these aggressive energies turn into something monstrous, and the result is Dis.

Many years ago, D.W. Winnicott made it clear that a healthy developing self requires that parental objects respond "well enough" to the child's spontaneous self which reaches the world through two channels—love and aggression. Both of these archetypal affects must be humanized through vigorous intercourse with persons who are important to us. Then they can integrate and we can use our aggression in the service of love, instead of hatred and defense. When this isn't possible, love and aggression remain archetypal, then get tangled in a pathological amalgam that devolves into the repetition compulsion and sado-masochistic defenses such as we see in Dante's vision of Dis and his prisoners.

Paul Russell (1999: 43–4) puts it this way:

> Love and hate lie at the very core of what trauma is all about. Insofar as one loves, one lives. Insofar as one hates, one dies....

> Hate occurs in response to an injury to the self. It is a species of pain, except that, because it is the wish to injure, kill, and destroy, it can, like autoimmune disease, become an illness itself.... Every stage of life has its own version of the struggle between the wish to kill and the yearning for attachment.... How is it possible to hate the loved and loving object, and live?

The answer to Russell's question is that primitive defenses make it possible to "hate the loved and loving object and live" because they split off and encapsulate the "bad" impulse/objects from the conscious ego and consign them to Hell, where they live side-by-side with the "innocent" and "good" parts of the infantile self that have been massacred in early attachment experiences, and been similarly oppressed. Both of these "bad" (sinful) inner part-self representations and their "good" (innocent) counterparts appear in Dante's story. As we will see, they live on different levels of Hades behind relatively open or severely locked gates—depending on how "bad" they are. Dante's vision of Hell is perhaps the first imaginative model for the gated communities of today!

Glimpses of Dis in the clinical situation

Glimpses of Dis and his gated prison, sometimes appear in the dreams of trauma survivors in psychotherapy. I will not soon forget one of my earliest experiences of this preternatural presence.

An anorexic patient with a significant trauma history, came to see me on the verge of an important new intimate relationship with a man. This new relationship was challenging her heretofore rigid, obsessive control over herself. In her second session, she reported a dream that much disturbed her. She dreamed that she was enjoying herself at a sort of summer camp until she slowly realized that no-one was permitted to leave the compound. The counselors and other campers in this "camp" all had perfect bodies and they worked out incessantly to retain their youthful beauty, while those who were slightly overweight or with bodily imperfections (the patient had great ambivalence about her own body) strangely disappeared from the compound.

To her growing horror my patient realized that she was being watched and evaluated every day by the "Governor General" of the camp and his staff, through a kind of overseeing eye that spied on her from above. In her panic she tried to escape, but was caught and dragged away by a group of this governor's thugs in black uniforms. Around her she saw other men and women staring passively into oblivion, having been robbed of their souls, a kind of living death. She woke breathless and terrified, and with the realization that she was in a concentration camp!

The systemic oppressiveness of this dream shocked both me and my patient. Here was a sinister "governor" controlling an inner dissociated

enclave in her dream, reminiscent of what John Steiner (1993) describes as a "psychic retreat." My patient did not know she was under the interior domination of such a perfectionistic tyrant whose oppression was directed against her body, but her dream made this clear. Such dreams alert us to the terrifying repressive forces that are kindled as change and new life begins to be felt by trauma survivors, and are reminders of a dark dis-integrating power of archetypal dimensions that has been pressed into service by the defense organization to dis-integrate and/or oppress the psyche/soma's animated energies in order to re-establish "his" control.

This dream was oddly helpful to my patient because it gave her a frightful image of what she was struggling with internally. Sometimes the capacity to simply *have* such a dream indicates a growing capacity in the dreamer for greater consciousness of inner conflict. In the ensuing weeks and months of her analysis the "governor general" (Dis) made his appearance in many other dreams. Slowly the patient realized that this defense (speaking as the inner voice of perfection and control) was really not "herself" but the enemy of her growth and individuation. As our therapeutic alliance strengthened, the patient began to risk self-activation and self-expression even in the face of Dis' nay-saying. This was very frightening for her but as she got stronger, the defense got weaker and took up a different role in her inner dialogue—one more closely approximating *dis*crimination.

Dis in psychoanalysis, Jungian theory, and beyond

The three-headed cannibal known as "Dis" is well known to psychoanalysis, but he has a controversial pedigree. Freud (1920: 35) would perhaps have interpreted him as a personification of the death instinct. Melanie Klein (1952) would probably have found him in what she imagined as children's cannibalistic and sadistic impulses toward the breast—also derivatives of a purported "death instinct." In Bion's (1959) language, Dis would personify the "attacks on linking" that are part of a destructive superego. Or, in his later writing Bion spoke of an inner "god," hostile to the acquisition of knowledge of emotional experience, hostile to "transformations in O," an iniquitous anti-growth factor menacing the inner world (Bion, 1970: 112). Winnicott (1964b) would have described him as a "primitive defense" against early trauma, and in Fairbairn's (1981) object-relations psychology, Dis was identified as an "Internal Saboteur" in the unconscious, attacking an "innocent" remainder of a regressed, "libidinal ego" in order to make psychic survival possible. Recent theorists like James Grotstein (1990: 257) might describe him as an out-picturing of the "black hole" at the center of the psyche, "the awesome force of powerlessness, of defect, of nothingness ... expressed, not just as a static emptiness but as an implosive, centripetal pull into the void." Neville Symington (1993: 71) sees him as the "terrible

inner tyrant" and as the attacking "false god" who is part of the narcissistic system (Symington, 2001: 107). There are many other theorists that I have reviewed elsewhere (see Kalsched, 1996: ch. 6).

Within the Jungian tradition many practitioners have also encountered "Dis" and found a place for him within their theoretical orientation. Jung himself would probably have seen Dis as personifying that *disintegrative effect* of what he called the autonomous fragmentary systems that appear from the collective layer of the unconscious, *possessing* the ego in mental disturbances:

> They are fragmentary psychic systems that either appear spontaneously in ecstatic states and evoke powerful impressions and effects, or else, in mental disturbances, become fixed in the form of delusions and hallucinations and consequently destroy the unity of the personality.
>
> (Jung, 1962: para. 47)

In Jung's later authorship he explored the figure of Dis as the destructive side of Mercurius (1953: para. 267), the collective shadow, or as the "dark side of the Self"—evidenced in the biblical account of Yahweh's unintegrated sadism toward his faithful servant, Job (Jung, 1952a).

Subsequent Jungian studies of the defenses represented by Dis include: Michael Fordham's (1974) paper "Defenses of the Self"; Schwartz-Salant's (1989) description of the Yahweh-like affects of the Borderline client; Pinkola-Estes' (1992) descriptions of the "innate predator" in the psyche of female analysands; and Linda Leonard's (1989) dark "Trickster" figure who allies himself with other Underworld characters including the "Underground Man," the "Outlaw," the "Critical Judge," and ultimately the "Killer." Finally, Barbara Steven Sullivan (2010: 118), who is majorly influenced by Neville Symington's ideas, speaks of an internal structure in the psyche that organizes anti-related—or narcissistic—energies against the related and integrative energies of the healthy psyche.

With the possible exception of Sullivan, none of these psychoanalytic or Jungian writers focus on Dis' role as an *agent of dissociation*; in other words, as a personification of *the psyche's dissociative defenses*. This is the approach we will be taking in this chapter. Traumatic experience in early childhood is *managed* by dissociation, which chops up the components of experience and makes life possible—in compartments. But trauma is kept alive in the inner world by continued dissociative attack, and this is where Dis comes in. If it weren't for this active inner agency, trauma would probably extinguish over time, but it doesn't. It is kept alive by Dis.

Dis' effect, and his struggle to stay alive in the psyche, is poignantly described by contemporary inspirational writer Eckhart Tolle. Tolle identifies the agency we are describing (Dis) as a residue of accumulated childhood pain that becomes lodged in the mind and body as a negative

energy field called the "pain-body" (Tolle, 1999: 29ff.). Tolle provides a useful analysis of this entity's modus operandi:

> The pain-body wants to survive, just like every other entity in existence, and it can only survive if it gets you to unconsciously identify with it. It can then rise up, take you over, "become you," and live through you. It needs to get its "food" through you. It will feed on any experience that resonates with its own kind of energy, anything that creates further pain in whatever form: anger, destructiveness, hatred, grief, emotional drama, violence, and even illness. So the pain-body when it has taken you over, will create a situation in your life that reflects back its own energy frequency for it to feed on. Pain can only feed on pain...
>
> Once the pain-body has taken you over, you want more pain. You become a victim or a perpetrator. You want to inflict pain, or you want to suffer pain or both.
>
> (Tolle, 1999: 30–1)

In this passage Tolle suggests that Dis gets his energy through seducing the ego into identification, i.e., into believing the truth of his negative interpretations of reality. These negative interpretations represent "stories" that explain suffering in terms of an innocent victim/evil perpetrator scenario and the more this reality becomes accepted as real, the more depressed and shame-ridden the inner child in the trauma survivor becomes. In this sense, Dis is like a vampire feeding on the host's life-blood, having no life-energy of its own. The depressing result is a true Faustian pact between the innocent remainder of the whole self and the Devil.

The descent

The structure of the Inferno—the first third of Dante's great poem—provides a virtual *topography of unconscious suffering*, beginning in an upper layer or ring (Limbo) in which the inmates are innocent and the suffering is mild, leading down a kind of funnel-shaped series of stepped layers of increasing sinfulness, increasing violence, and increasing pain until the "Pit" is reached at the very center of the earth. Here the great Dis himself resides, surrounded by fire and ice.

The *Divine Comedy* is in three parts, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, corresponding to three realms of the *afterlife*. In the Inferno, suffering is either mild or severe, but goes on "eternally." In the Purgatorio, suffering can be "worked through" in time through acceptance and repentance. Suffering becomes meaningful and eventually ends. In the Paradiso, suffering disappears altogether in eternal bliss.

Dante begins his downward journey, we are told, because the poet is depressed—lost in a kind of midlife crisis. The first lines declare:

Midway this way of life we're bound upon, I woke to find myself in a dark wood, where the right road was wholly lost and gone.

(Alighieri, 1978: 71)

The illustration by Dore in Figure 3.2 shows the depressed Dante lost in the forest. For Dante's depression, a descent into his own interiority to encounter the full reality of his suffering is apparently the necessary medicine—a kind of homeopathic remedy.

THE FOREST

Midway upon the journey of our life / I found myself within a forest dark, / For the straightforward pathway had been lost (*Inf.* I, 1–3).

Figure 3.2 Dante lost in the dark wood preparing for the descent into the Inferno.

The poet's first impulse in this situation is to ascend a nearby hill whose summit is illuminated by heavenly sunshine (Canto I), but his way is blocked and his path is drawn deeper into the underworld. Virgil appears and explains to him (like any good guide/psychotherapist) that if he is ever to heal his depressed state he must first make a descent into Hell in order to become conscious of the psychic pain he has dissociated. In the psychotherapy situation, this involves re-visiting those split-off, unremembered experiences that remain alive as "implicit memories," encoded in the body, and in relational self-states that must be re-experienced in the present with the therapist as witness (see Bromberg, 1998, 2008).

Virgil also reminds Dante that the journey he so fears has been prescribed by none other than Beatrice, Dante's great love on earth, and that Beatrice has herself descended into Limbo and recruited Virgil out of her love for Dante (Canto II). So the whole journey takes place under the healing oversight of Beatrice's love. So encouraged, and guided by his beloved poet-friend, Dante reluctantly surrenders to the downward path.

"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here"

Dante's journey begins at Hell's gate, where he and his poet-guide read the inscription on the lintel above the gate: "Through me the road to the city of desolation ... lay down all hope, you that go in by me." Dante has lost hope, and if he is to have any chance of recovering real hope again, he has to abandon hope as he knows it—false hope. This is Dante's paradox—one that has relevance to the clinical situation as well. Actually it might be more accurate to say that in order to recover hope, Dante must *enter the area of his own hopelessness*—but he must do this voluntarily and consciously, with his guide, Virgil, the ancient poet as a witness. Speaking psychologically, this area of abandoned hope is the area where the child's hope was dashed, where transitional space collapsed, and primitive defenses (Dis) became necessary in order to save the child's soul—its core of aliveness. Part of what keeps the abandoned child alive inside Dis' system is false hope. Eventually this will have to be abandoned.

To re-encounter these places of unbearable pain one must proceed slowly, one layer at a time. It would do Dante no good if he simply fell into the pit of Hell. One part of him has to be conscious of what he's doing, to witness it. This part is represented by the shade of Virgil and in psychoanalysis by the growth of a *witnessing consciousness*—first carried by the analyst, then slowly taken up by the patient.

As the poets enter the precincts of Hell, they realize that hope must be relinquished there because the suffering in Hell is eternal suffering—it goes on and on without relief, without hope of comfort, liberation, or

release. This eternal pain was, for Dante, the worst imaginable punishment for a sinful life on earth. It seems that the human imagination cannot feature anything quite so terrible as suffering that goes on and on forever without hope. This kind of suffering is very familiar to us in the clinical situation with those survivors of early trauma who must use dissociation as a defense. Their suffering never extinguishes. It goes on and on "eternally." Why is this?

Freud and Jung called this kind of repetitive suffering "neurotic suffering" as distinguished from the authentic suffering necessary for individuation. Jung was explicit about these two forms of suffering in his essay "Psychotherapy and a Philosophy of Life" (Jung, 1943: 81):

> The principle aim of psychotherapy is not to transport the patient to an impossible state of happiness, but to help him acquire steadfastness and philosophic patience in face of suffering. Life demands for its completion and fulfillment a balance between joy and sorrow. But because suffering is positively disagreeable, people naturally prefer not to ponder how much fear and sorrow fall to the lot of man. So they speak soothingly about progress and the greatest possible happiness, forgetting that happiness is itself poisoned if the measure of suffering has not been fulfilled. Behind a neurosis there is so often concealed all the natural and necessary suffering the patient has been unwilling to bear.

It is around this distinction between real and neurotic suffering that most of our understanding of psychopathology revolves. It turns out that neurotic suffering never ends because *it is kept alive by an inner factor*, and, among other things, this inner factor will not let a normal affect-cycle complete itself. Everything stays suspended and frozen, and goes on forever. Both Freud and Jung were impressed with this fact.

Of certain very resistant patients, Freud (1966: 49) said "There is no doubt that there is something in these people that sets itself against their recovery." And in 1906 Jung, describing his patient Sabina Speilrein (quoted in Minder, 2001), talked about a "morbid" fragment of personality or complex in her psyche, "the inclinations, judgments, and resolutions of which move only in the direction of the will to be ill." This perverse second personality, Jung said, "devours what is left of the normal ego and forces it into the role of a secondary (oppressed) complex" (Jung, 1906, quoted in Minder 2001: 45).

In Dante's universe the "morbid" or "perverse" secondary personality referenced by Freud and Jung is none other than Dis. He represents the personified inner factor who prevents recovery—the "god" who turns suffering into violence and in the process creates an inner Hell in which realistic hope cannot enter. The result is severe depression.

Dis and the demon of depression

Dante begins his journey because he is depressed and an encounter with the "demon" in this depression is what is required of him in our story. Depression has often been described as a "demon" that robs one of one's soul. Andrew Solomon's (2001) *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression* describes two important aspects of major depression that illustrate what it's like when Dis takes over the inner world: First, the overwhelming nature and autonomy of the mood—the way it takes on a life of its own; and second, the relentless attack of the depressed mood on vulnerability and soulful aliveness, robbing a person of his/her own spark of animation. Both are relevant to our theme in this chapter.

"My depression," Solomon reports:

> had grown on me [like a vine that had slowly conquered the old oak tree on which it climbed]. It had been a sucking thing that had wrapped itself around me, ugly and more alive than I. It had a life of its own that bit by bit asphyxiated all of my life out of me. At the worst stage ... I had moods that were not my moods: They belonged to the depression.
>
> (Solomon, 2001: 18)

The source of this depressive "presence," Solomon avers, is emotional pain that has broken free of its causes and become something else, something big, something daimonic. In Jungian language we would say that the emotional pain has broken free of its *personal* causes and (through accretion or because of the ego's immaturity) fallen into or activated daimonic factors from the collective layer of the psyche. Here are the titanic and monstrous elements of which Dis is a prime example. These energies are overwhelming, "bigger than life."

Major depression is so big, says Solomon, that it can only be described in metaphor and allegory:

> Saint Anthony in the desert, asked how he could differentiate between angels who came to him humble and devils who came in rich disguise, said you could tell how you felt after they had departed. When an angel left, you felt strengthened by his presence; when a devil left, you felt horror. Grief is a humble angel who leaves you with strong, clear thoughts and a sense of your own depth. Depression is a demon who leaves you appalled.
>
> (Solomon, 2001: 16)

One of Solomon's important points is that his depression, having broken free of its initial causes in the grief he felt after his mother's death, *took on a life of its own, all the while feeding off of his life.* This horrific idea of an inne

entity parasitically living off its "host" parallels Tolle's description of the "pain-body" above.

According to Solomon (2001: 15) "depression is the flaw in love," by which he means that depression is our inability to grieve for the loss of those we love. This emotional pain in the face of loss is disavowed. It breaks away from its original traumatic origin, is amplified by other pain, and becomes a defense against feeling—a "nothingness" that Freud (1917) called the "shadow of the object," and French writer Julia Kristeva (1989: 46) calls the "non-lost object" or "Thing" which is "buried alive." This lost soul, in turn, is "walled up within a crypt of inexpressible affect" (Kristeva, 1989: 53), an apt image for Dante's gated city of Dis.

These accounts illustrate how the *act of loving* is a terrible risk for everyone, and especially for people who have grown up in emotionally impoverished environments. To really love someone (without symbiotically attaching to them through identification) is to risk losing them, precisely because we live in an insecure, unpredictable world in which death, separation, or abandonment is an ever-present reality. It is this vulnerability that Dis will no longer allow, because love has resulted in unbearable loss earlier in a child's life. Later attachments remind the depressed person of early catastrophic injuries in loving. So Dis creates a "crypt" within which the spark of aliveness and innocent vulnerability is imprisoned. He is the Devil to whom the soul is "sold" in order for a false or partial life to go on.

In a later interview of Andrew Solomon (Tippett, 2010: 228), he reports how the "noonday demon" robbed him of his soul. Tracing the onset of his depression to his incapacity to grieve the death of his mother, he says:

> The passage from grief into nothingness was very alarming and very strange. I still would have said, I'm terribly upset that my mother died, and so on and so forth. But the feeling went out of it. I think that's why, when the feeling comes back, you think: this is a soul. This is a spirit. This is something profound and alive which returned to me after taking a leave of absence.

So Dis's role in the inner world of the depressed person is to attack the links between emotion and thought, thereby destroying the ability to feel and dissociating the soul. In the process, he tempts the trauma survivor with an *exchange*—an exchange in which a chronic, "eternal" form of suffering (more tolerable but neverending) is exchanged for the more acute, painful suffering that would lead to transformation. (The depressed person is not *aware* of this exchange.) Mythologically this is the classic Faustian bargain with the devil and amounts to a refusal within the inner world of a creative mourning process—a process that would eventually lead out of depression to renewed life. It is a bargain with the "god" who transforms suffering into violence.

The alternative to the Devil's bargain is a more acute form of suffering that requires greater affect-tolerance and usually cannot be engaged without a compassionate witness. This is true *grief work* and it means allowing love for the lost person and the full *reality* of his/her loss to exist simultaneously in consciousness, feeling the acute pain that accompanies such awareness. This is apparently one of the most difficult things to do, psychologically, and we know this because of the dramatic measures we take to avoid it. It is much easier and more preferred to let depression's demon ("the flaw in love") get the upper hand, cutting us off from acute pain. But by refusing to allow the grief work that would make mourning creative, dissociation (Dis) sets up a repetitive state of despair that devours itself, takes on a life of its own, and leads back into itself "eternally," leaving the soul in permanent alienated captivity.

In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) Freud makes clear that loss of the loved object must be actively grieved one step at a time and that a failure to spend adequate time doing this, including actively reviewing, remembering, and pining for the lost love, leads to depression. John Bowlby vividly described what happens to children when they are not in an environment in which they are helped to do this. In his monumental three-volume *Attachment and Loss* (Bowlby, 1969–1980), he showed that unwitnessed, unmediated mourning goes through predictable phases, from initial numbness to protesting, pining, and searching, to eventual disorganization, despair, and detachment (Dis). In Dante's poem we see the terrifying inner world that results from such untransformed mourning.

Clinical example: the case of Helen

A young female art student named "Helen," who had suffered repeated physical and sexual abuse by her alcoholic father, and no support from an absent mother, arrived at her first therapy appointment on a motorcycle in black leather and spent the entire hour in cynical condemnation of her roommate who had recently gotten married and had a baby. She was tough, contemptuous toward others, cynical about life in general, and extremely armored against any acknowledgment of her own pain. She suffered from a number of psycho-somatic complaints – chronic back pain, incapacitating premenstrual cramps, and recurrent epileptic-like symptoms where she would "go blank" for several minutes. Her inner life was haunted by morbid feelings of being a living dead-person and full of overwhelming rage, portrayed in horrifying "artistic" images of mutilation and dismemberment—chopped off hands, arms, and heads.

This patient suffered from periods of suicidal despair and disintegration anxiety in which demonic inner objects would command her to burn herself or cut herself. She was terrified by quasi-delusional beliefs that she was a witch or had been a witch in a past life and she had had

several past life "readings" which supported the idea that she was atoning in this life for some hideous Karmic debt incurred from the diabolical murder of a child in some previous existence. She even tortured herself with the fantasy that in her past life she had been in desperate circumstances, was starving, and had perhaps eaten this child (remember Dis in Figure 3.1).

The first two years of her therapy involved a stormy process of gradual stabilization. The patient was full of paranoid or persecutory anxiety about my influence on her inner self-management defenses and she had a constant need to over-control the field between us. I had to pay special attention to moments of derailment in the transference, usually caused by my empathic failures, my flawed memory, my "irresponsible vacation schedule," etc. At first when these micro-traumas occurred she would simply cut off and go blank. Later she began to feel her anger and this led to a highly volatile atmosphere in which the inner figure of Dis would be projected in the transference and she became paranoid about my "intentions."

Any interpretive efforts on my part or sometimes even an effort to reframe what she was saying to bring out her feelings might lead to a flood of satanic images—either of me or of herself. Omnipotent fantasies about her power to cause me illness or misfortune would erupt unbidden, then she would feel guilty and try to surround herself in a golden light to balance a demonic fantasy with angelic influence. Several times she felt so misunderstood and furious that she left sessions early. Once she confessed that she had suffered the demonic fantasy of "making" my plane crash on a vacation trip I had taken. And then, later, in a reflective moment, she said "these Satanic images don't feel like me! They feel like visitations of the Devil." Here my patient was gaining some insight, because these non-human aspects of her relationship to me in the transference *did* erupt from a daimonic level of her archaic self-care system. They were moments in which Dis asserted control over her from within. Until she developed some anxiety tolerance and an ability to communicate her anger in words, these eruptions continued. Somehow we survived the destruction of this period.

Slowly my patient's anger began to be more related and could be rendered into language instead of erupting inside her as a demonic image. Daimonic energies began to be humanized and, correspondingly, some of the persecutory anxiety of her inner world lessened. Dis was always around and could freeze everything up again with one flap of his dreadful wings, but now behind her anger there were the beginnings of a connection to me that she could let herself feel, at least occasionally.

She was always irritable and short-tempered but now there were interludes of warmth and connection between us. For example, sometimes while observing me she would begin to tear up. I would ask what she was feeling and she couldn't always tell me. But once (I'll never forget it), she said she was experiencing a little bubble of gratitude welling up from

inside herself. I smiled and repeated the word back to her with a question mark ... gratitude? "Yeah," she said, "for being able to get so mad at you and be so nasty sometimes and it's OK with you ... you don't leave. At least so far, you haven't withdrawn."

One day, in the middle of this thawing of our relations, I raised my patient's fees five dollars, including Helen's. Although she insisted within the session that she had no particular reaction to this (everything was "fine"—just send her the bill, she "didn't even want to think about it") an hour later she called me in an agitated state and broke her next appointment. She was furious and wanted nothing more to do with therapy and its "crass business arrangements." "Fuck you! I Hate you!" she screamed into the phone and hung up. Several days went by. I decided not to call her back. Later that week I received a letter in the mail with an apology for her anger, expressing the wish to resume our sessions. When I next met her in the waiting room she asked sheepishly if I were "all right." She confessed how overwhelmed she had been by rage and anger and talked of the panic she felt at having completely "ruined" the relationship. Then she mentioned a dream she had the night of her "explosion" on the telephone.

In the dream, she and an unknown man are on some sort of mission. They wend their way through a thick, dark wood and come eventually upon a deep cave with two stone pillars at its entrance. Just inside, on the edge of the enveloping darkness, huddled near one of the pillars, hides a little girl, tattered and dirty, like one of the "wild children" discovered in France. The dream ends as the patient wakes in fear. Helen had an instinctive sense that this dream was important. There was something haunting to her about this "wild child"—something fearful, yet compelling and attractive. She associated the unknown man in the dream to me and she thought her fear in the dream on encountering the wild girl was like her fear when all the wild anger had leaped out of her.

Comment

Here is a moment Ronald Fairbairn (1981: 69–70) would have described as a terrifying "release of bad objects" from the unconscious—something some patients dread more than anything else. In terms of our story, these "bad objects" live in the precincts of Dis. Fairbairn says:

> there is now little doubt in my mind that the release of bad objects from the unconscious is one of the chief aims which the psychotherapist should set himself out to achieve, even at the expense of a severe "transference neurosis" ... the bad objects can only be safely released, however, if the analyst has become established as a sufficiently good object for the patient; [therefore] it may be said of all psychoneurotic and psychotic patients that, if a True Mass is being celebrated in the chancel, a Black Mass is being celebrated

in the crypt. It becomes evident, accordingly, that the psychotherapist is the true successor to the exorcist, and that he is concerned, not only with "the forgiveness of sins," but also with "the casting out of devils."

Helen had never risked this amount of rage with me before. She had "dissed" me in no uncertain terms. Yet, when old Dis was liberated from the unconscious, so was this abandoned child-self, as if the rage connected to dissociation had to be unlocked from the inner world and directed outward in an actual object-relationship before we could "see" this lost child hidden in its cave. These lost innocent children in Helen's psyche were encapsulated in a part of her inner world that was inaccessible to her prideful ego, with its intolerance of vulnerability. As our work proceeded over the ensuing months, there were many other dreams in which this abandoned child appeared, often around moments between us where we worked through some hurt or misunderstanding to a place of greater intimacy. In this process, Dis slowly relaxed his grip.

The descent continued: Limbo

Crossing the Acheron river, Dante and his guide enter the uppermost level of Hell. Inside a special walled castle is Limbo, a world full of endless lamentation—not the shrieks of pain filling the lower regions of Hell, but hopeless sighing. Here dwell two groups of innocents, first the virtuous pagans and sages (including the righteous patriarchs of the Old Testament) who lived for centuries before Christ's coming and therefore without the benefit of salvation (see Dore's illustration in Figure 3.3); and second, infants and young children who either lived before Christ's coming or were taken by death before being baptized.

> We heard no loud complaint, no crying there,
> No sound of grief except the sound of sighing
> Quivering forever through the eternal air;
> Grief, not for torment, but for loss undying...
> (Alighieri, 1978: 92)

The innocent sufferers in Limbo, both righteous patriarchs and innocent children, are suffering a chronic form of misery. But, psychologically speaking, they are spared the more acute suffering that would accrue to actual contact with the inner and/or outer world. Recalling that the self-care system is "in business," so to speak, to insulate a vulnerable core of the self from further suffering, we see the archetypal "rationale" for a level of Hell in which suffering is tolerable and in which innocence is protected from experience. Figure 3.4 shows the innocent children trapped in Limbo.

LIMBO—THE INNOCENT SOULS
"Lost are we, and are only so far punished, / That without hope we live on in desire"
(*Inf.* IV, 41, 42)

Figure 3.3 Righteous patriarchs and other innocents lost in a cave in Limbo.

In Limbo, Dante is overcome with sadness, realizing that his guide himself was one of those virtuous pagans suspended here because he had lived before Christ's birth. He asks Virgil whether anyone has ever gotten out of this encapsulated enclave and Virgil replies:

> When I was newly in this state, I saw One come in majesty and awe, And on His head were crowns of victory.... Our great first father's spirit [Adam] He did withdraw, and righteous Abel, Noah who built the ark, Moses.... King David, Abraham, Rachel ... with many another of His chosen nation; These did He bless; and know, that ere that day No human soul had ever seen salvation.
>
> (Alighieri, 1978: 92–3)

The mythical "event" to which Virgil alludes in this passage was known to medieval theologians as the "Harrowing of Hell" (see MacCulloch, 1930; Kalsched, 1981). References to Christ's descent and "sojourn in prison" are common in the writings of the early Church fathers and in the apocryphal writings of the first three centuries. According to these accounts,

Figure 3.4 Innocent children in Limbo.

Christ descended into Limbo during the time between his death on the cross and his resurrection. After breaking through the gates of Hell and struggling for three days with Dis, he rescued the souls of Adam, the other righteous patriarchs, and the infants who had been born before Christ's coming. These otherwise innocent souls did not merit the extreme torments of hell's deep flames (the "pain of sense"), yet, on the other hand, they inherited Adam's original sin and, *missing the sacrament of baptism,* had to suffer a lesser "pain of loss" (of the Beatific Vision). This "lost-ness" was a kind of eternal hopelessness and alienation from God—in psychological language, a severing of the ego–Self axis—a foreclosing of potential space, the encapsulation of innocence, and hence the loss of hope.

In medieval art, between the ninth and fifteenth centuries, the subject was commonly depicted as one of the scenes of Christ's passion. The

imagery of these paintings frequently shows the youthful Christ with cross-nimbus, breaking through the gates of Limbo. Brass doors and their broken bolts have fallen to the ground in pieces, crushing the fettered figure of Satan (Dis) underneath, while the luminous Christ, astride the abyss of Hell, reaches out a hand for Adam, Eve, Abel, John the Baptist, and other innocents, including children, all of whom are liberated. (See Plate 4 from the Cathedral in Sienna.) In some illustrations (see Plate 5) the crypt of Hell is represented as the maw of a monster who has "swallowed" the souls of innocents.

The following passage from the "Easter Eve Homily of Epiphanius" describes Christ rescuing Adam, the aboriginal form or image of man:

> The Lord entered bearing the conquering weapon of the Cross. Adam trembling cried: "My Lord be with all." Christ replied "And with thy spirit." And taking his hand, He raised him saying "Awake, O sleeping one, and rise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light.... Arise O sleeping one, Arise, for I did not make thee to be bound in Hades. Arise from the dead – I am the Life of the dead. Arise, My image, arise My form, who was made in My image. Arise, let us go hence. For thou art in Me and I in thee, and in undivided person we exist.
>
> (MacCulloch, 1930: 195)

Comment on Limbo

Psychologically, Christ's harrowing of Hell represents a penetration of the schizoid crypt or "psychic retreat" (Steiner, 1993) in which innocence is caught in a state of suspended animation—unalive but also undead. We have seen this state in all the cases cited in Chapter 2, where an animated core of the personality had been lost and was eventually recovered, albeit with great resistance.

This state of self-encapsulation is frequently reported by our patients in psychotherapy, where they feel "stuck" in life, and sometimes stuck in their analysis, unable to find that source of animation in themselves that they seek. This state of alienation and despair, where the ego is essentially cut off from companionship with the "inner man" or true self (Winnicott) is according to Fairbairn (1981: 3) "the most deep-seated of all psychopathological states," i.e., the "schizoid condition." Fundamentally, it results from traumatic or incremental rejection by the nourishing environment of the child's spontaneous self—the failure, in Fairbairn's language, "of the child's mother to convince her child by spontaneous and genuine expressions of affection that she herself loves him as a person" (Fairbairn, 1981: 13). In a child so afflicted, the emotional core of the personality (the innocent "first man" or Adam-self) withdraws from the functioning false self that lives in the external world. The person does not feel completely real and is unable to commit

him/herself wholeheartedly to anything or anyone, existing always in the limbo of a half-way position—living, as it were, a *provisional life*.[3] Until the inner, aboriginal soul-carrying part of the self finds a home within the personality, it determines the patient's conscious feeling that he or she never "fits in," never "belongs" anywhere, never has a "home" in the world.

Dante's story says that transformation of this encapsulation comes when contact is made between the prisonhouse of Limbo, supervised by Dis, and the upper world of ego-consciousness. This *linking* and the restored hope that comes with it occurs (mythologically speaking) when an *intercessory* figure makes a descent and liberates the captives caught in the hellish underworld. This figure in Dante's story is Jesus Christ—an intermediate being (part-human, part-divine), thereby able to travel between the worlds, from conscious to unconscious, from Heaven to Hell, and back again. In this sense, he has good company as an avatar of depth psychology, whose patron saint Hermes/Mercurius provides the same "services" in Greek mythology (see Kalsched, 1995).

As the rescuer of innocence, Christ is also, mythologically speaking, the "innocent" one who voluntarily goes to his death on the cross, thereby "emptying himself" completely of his divinity and suffering the full reality of human mortality—his and our "sickness unto death" as Kierkegaard put it. This voluntary choice to let his innocence suffer mercilessly (again speaking mythologically) opens up the possibility of new life (his resurrection) and also the liberation of those souls trapped in Dis' prisonhouse. This, in turn (the story says), leads to the possibility of living as an "undivided person" where the lost soul of the aboriginal (Adamic) self is recovered and life can go on.

According to Virgil, this penetration from above has never happened before, and constitutes the opening of a vertical dimension in an otherwise one-dimensional horizontal world brought about by dissociation and its Dark Lord. We might think of this "intercession" as a restoration of what Jung refers to as the psyche's symbolic or "transcendent function"—or what Edward Edinger described as the restitution of the ego–Self axis. This kind of spiritual rescue "from above" is rare, but the following account shows that it does happen, even in today's secular age.

An example of a breakthrough with spiritual implications

Reported in the *New York Times* on June 23, 2011 by Benedict Carey (Carey, 2011: 1), is the story of American psychologist Marsha Linehan, the creative inspiration behind a new approach to the psychotherapy of individuals with severe mental illness. Dr. Linehan, now 68, told her story recently to an audience of friends, family, and doctors at the Institute of Living in Hartford, Connecticut, where she had previously been hospitalized. Her inspiration to finally reveal the dark secrets about her own severe suffering was a question asked by one of her own patients: "Are you one of

us?" The inquiring patient went on to say that if Dr. Linehan could honestly admit to being "one of us" it would make a tremendous difference. It would give her patients hope.

The story that Dr. Linehan then had the courage to tell describes how she had suffered as a young woman from severe episodes of schizophrenia and "borderline personality disorder," including many attempts at suicide. Hospitalized in 1961 at the age of 17, Linehan was placed in a locked seclusion room because she attacked herself repeatedly, burning her wrists with cigarettes, slashing her arms, legs, and midsection with any sharp object she could find. In seclusion her wish to die only deepened and she took to banging her head on the walls or floor. In the language of this chapter she was in complete possession by Dis.

> My whole experience of these episodes was that someone else was doing it; it was like "I know this is coming, I'm out of control, somebody help me; where are you, God?" I felt totally empty, like the Tin Man; I had no way to communicate what was going on, no way to understand it.
>
> (Carey, 2011: A17)

Not knowing what else to do, the staff of the institute put Linehan on drugs, provided analytic psychotherapy, gave her shock treatments, etc. But none of these approaches seemed to touch her underlying sense of despair, the pervading sense of badness, the squalls of rage and emptiness, or the self-destructive urges from which she suffered. She felt truly possessed and in a private Hell from which there was no escape. Only her passionate caring for other people seemed to match her loneliness. "I was in hell," she said. "And I made a vow: when I get out, I'm going to come back and get others out of here" (Carey, 2011: A17).

After her discharge, Linehan was a desperate 23-year-old who barely survived outside the hospital. Further suicide episodes followed, then another hospitalization and the old familiar crushing despair. Then one desperate night, while praying in a small Catholic chapel in Chicago, Marsha Linehan experienced her own private version of the "Harrowing of Hell" and the liberation of her innocence. Here is her description:

> I was sitting in that sitting room right outside the chapel ... which I will never forget because I was sitting on the couch and I think I felt complete and total despair—and this nun walked by and she turned and looked and said "is there anything I can do for you?" And I realized that no-one could help me. No-one. I said no thank you and she left and so I got up and went into the chapel and I was just kneeling there and I was just looking at the cross above the altar and then out of the blue—out of the complete blue—suddenly everything became golden. And suddenly I felt something coming

> towards me. The crucifix started shimmering and the room was shimmering and I had this unbelievable experience of God loving me. I jumped up and ran out and ran to my room and I was standing in my room and I said out loud "I love myself!" And the minute—the very minute the word *myself* came out of my mouth—I knew that I had been completely transformed. Because up until that point I would have never said that. I would have said I love you. Because I had no sense of *myself*. I thought of myself as you. The minute the word myself came from my mouth, I knew—and I've always known ever since—that I would never cross that line again, into being crazy.
>
> (Carey, 2011: A17)

This transformation, notes the *New York Times* reporter, lasted the better part of a year, until the end of a romantic relationship, whereupon the devastated feelings returned, but now she could weather the storms of self-destructiveness. Marsha Linehan later earned her Ph.D. at Loyola University and went on to create her own approach to treatment, now called dialectical behavior therapy, or DBT, which incorporates elements from various behavioral therapies—and especially her own discoveries of what worked in her case. For example, by intimately tracking those inner emotions that led to negative thoughts, and hence to destructive action, and by doing this "mindfully" with help from Zen meditation, Linehan was able to interrupt the otherwise cascading sequence of negativity and self-destruction controlled by her inner Dis. Also, what she came to call "radical acceptance" played an increasingly important role in her work with patients (Carey, 2011: A17).

In both Dante's imagery of the vertical penetration of Limbo and in Marsha Linehan's moment in the chapel, a dimension of radical self-acceptance and "love" broke into the hellish enclosure. And in both cases, this event seemed to occur at the lowest, most abysmal point, where all hope had been given up. (It was as though at the moment of total helplessness and despair where the soul might be completely annihilated, even old Dis cannot stand it any longer and suddenly transforms into his prefallen radiant, Luciferian self!) In both Dante's story and in Marsha Linehan's report, the penetrating content was radiant, shimmering, golden. In Linehan's case, it changed her life forever.

Stuck in Limbo: malignant innocence

Marshal Linehan's suffering was transformative and redemptive, but there are many patients who seem never to escape Dis' tortures and whose childhood omnipotence and innocence is never allowed to be transformed by experience. It stays in Limbo forever. As we will see in the clinical case of "Diane" below, it is possible to get locked into one's psychic retreat, and then innocence seems to become "malignant" (Bollas, 1995: 200–1), i.e., it

enters an unholy alliance with inverted aggression and becomes a justification for all manner of abusive behavior by the host personality in whom childhood innocence and oppressive rage are bound together in a victim–perpetrator dynamic.

Christopher Bollas distinguishes malignant innocence from generative innocence (1995: 200–1). "Generative innocence," says Bollas, "is essential to the life of every developing person." It provides a necessary illusion of absolute safety – "the belief in a 'golden era' when all was well." Generative innocence allows for the slow accumulation of experience and the gradual humanization of omnipotent psychic energies.

But when trauma strikes and primitive defenses take over, innocence is split off, retained in the unconscious (in Limbo) and becomes "absolute." Malignant innocence, says Bollas, is when people insist on *absolute innocence* of the self throughout life and are always looking for others to accuse of abusing them:

> The violated child has lost his or her generative innocence forever. It is a profound tragedy. People who participate in the contemporary festival of victimology trivialize the tragic effect of abuse when they insist on the absolute and irretrievable evidence of human innocence rather than the generative innocence of origins.... Malignant innocents, who may insist upon absolute innocence of the self throughout life and who designate certain objects (mothers, fathers, men, homosexuals, or whatever) as perpetual villains, trade off the sympathy and need that all of us have to believe in the necessity of innocence.
>
> (Bollas, 1995: 201)

With untransformed, "absolute" innocence locked up in the crypt of Limbo, insulated from reality by a tyrannical and daimonic dismembering figure named Dis, things begin to disintegrate for the trauma survivor. Clinically speaking, this hellish pairing of *infantalism* with *grandiosity*—of dependent vulnerability on the one hand, and righteous, tyrannical rage (if the dependency is injured) on the other—is well known in the psychoanalytic literature as borderline personality disorder. This condition, hypothesized to be based on a sado-masochistic inner dyad, has been described by many object-relations clinicians (see Kernberg, 1975: 226–9; Masterson, 1976, 1981), and is notorious for the difficulty it poses in the psychotherapy situation. Such individuals can be both imperiously righteous and parasitically infantile at the same time.

Diane: malignant innocence

"Diane" came to see me for help with a new love relationship and her extreme panic reactions about losing this new boyfriend. She also had a

history of relationship difficulties in which her anger would frequently erupt and "blow people away." We soon recovered early memories of herself as an expressive, animated child, whose emotional life seemed to suffer a major catastrophe around the age of four or five. At that time, a brain-damaged younger brother was born and her parents disappeared into their obsessive worries about this handicapped but otherwise "beautiful" boy, who required frequent trips to a distant city for special care in a hospital, leaving Diane behind. Diane remembers feeling close to her mother before the brother's birth, but then "everything changed," including her father.

Diane described her father as an irascible right-wing truck-driver, frequently in a rage at her mother or herself, often denigrating Diane's fat body or her "stupidity." Dinner times in his presence were a horror as he verbally assaulted the mother for not controlling her handicapped son, then humiliated Diane for her "animal eating habits," her "ugly pig-body," for saying "stupid" things, etc. These humiliations by her father were unspeakably painful for Diane. She would often burst into tears, leave the table, and go to her room to console herself.

As she entered the school environment, things became still worse. She couldn't concentrate in class, got a reputation of being "slow," and was picked on by other children and routinely beaten up by a boy in the neighborhood who also began to molest her sexually. Diane remembers that everything seemed to get "darker" around this time. She remembered the experience of inner disconnection when she was being abused by this boy—feeling numb, distant, watching herself from another place in the room. Dis had moved into her inner world.

Diane's harassed mother had little time for her daughter's needs, and Diane began to harden herself in order to survive. Slowly, her growing disconnection from her mother became a disconnection from herself and from her body. The previously animated innocent child she had been disappeared from Diane's outer life and took up residence in a separate world, in a Limbo of lost souls. From this inner sanctum it could emerge only in certain safe places in her life, in her private play with her dolls or with her favorite cat or in her appreciation of nature or later in her reading of poetry—and still later in her analysis.

As Diane grew into young adulthood, her energies were drawn increasingly into a busy professional life where she became a workaholic and a perfectionist and very successful, outwardly. But inside she was a chaotic mess of bitterness, fear, and self-loathing. Charming, attractive, and ingratiating on the outside, she began to hate her inner feminine child-self because of its neediness and its dependency, and she began to hate the imperfect, inferior "fat" body where it lived. It wasn't long before she developed an eating disorder and started wishing she were a boy. She became depressed and her isolation increased. By the time I met her 30 years later she was a very successful corporate lawyer, slim and attractive with barely a hair out of place, but inwardly she was in despair.

Before Diane finally surrendered to therapy, she had tried to turn her inner suffering into a variety of outer causes. She became an animal rights activist and spent much of her time rescuing innocent animals that had been run over on the roads near her home, taking them to area veterinarians. She became furious at some of these animal doctors because of their alleged insensitivity to her and the animals, and ended up in a legal action against one of them. She also joined a very conservative Catholic congregation and became active in the "Right to Life" movement where she championed the rights of innocent, unborn babies who were threatened with abortion. As part of her church activities she often demonstrated outside abortion clinics and was once arrested for her loud and angry confrontation with a policeman.

In short, Diane's original childhood innocence had become malignant. It had become *absolute*, and was fueling her rage and her wish for revenge. Her inner world had become a Hell such as pictured by Dante's *Inferno*. She no longer had access to her own vulnerability but projected it onto innocent animals or unborn infants. She saw the entire world in terms of innocent victims and evil perpetrators, but she could not feel the innocent needs in herself without shame, nor the in-turned anger that repressed these needs. She was living in a projected world in which both sides of her inner Hell—Dis and his innocent prisoners—were found only "out there" in the world of unborn babies or "wicked abortion doctors."

The following incident occurred several months into our work together. A crisis had occurred because Diane had been criticized by her two closest friends. Her best girl-friend had called her "shallow and superficial," and the new man she was dating had complained that he really didn't know her very well and felt she was "hiding herself" from him.

Diane arrived at one of her appointments "angry as hell" on the surface, but clearly hurt by these remarks and feeling uncharacteristically sad. As usual, she deflected my initial inquiries into her feelings and tried to cover them over with black humor, but finally in this session she was able to stay with her hurt and sadness for a few moments. I asked her where this sadness was located in her body whereupon she pointed to her heart. At this moment, her eyes began to rim with tears. Taking advantage of this newfound affect, we were able to link the painful criticism of her friends to the pattern of incessant shaming and humiliation by her father.

As the shame-filled details of these experiences emerged into memory, Diane began to panic and have trouble breathing. A pattern of approach/avoidance regarding her feelings ensued. Her eyes would fill with tears, followed by a kind of restricted, spasmodic cry. After recovering she would make a joke about what a "basket case" she was, then sit nervously biting her knuckles until the tears came again. Each time, after establishing a workable window of affect tolerance in the session, I gently encouraged further explorations of her feelings, suggesting that she slow down, breathe, and tell me more about what she was remembering. She made

some real progress in this session, staying with her feelings, notwithstanding that each time she pinched them off involuntarily, apologizing for using my tissues, and making some dark, ironic joke. Finally, to her considerable relief, the session was over.

I was moved by this difficult session, although worried that I had perhaps pushed her too fast. Then, as she walked from the waiting room and down the stairs, my patient commented ironically, "don't worry ... I'll never bring the puking, mewling, little one in here again, if I can help it!" I was shocked to hear this statement from my patient who I had sensed was as pleased as I was with the new opening we had found together in her feelings—feelings about which she had become ashamed.

That night she had the following dream:

> I am captive with a group of young girls on a houseboat on some canal system. It is an inky dark night—no moon. The Captain—dressed in black—keeps trying to kill us one by one. He's sinister and evil, like Hannibal Lecter in *Silence of the Lambs.* I'm trying to escape with a young girl with whom I'm chained at the ankles but she is weak and can't keep up with me. She slips into the water and we can't go on so finally we are captured. The young girl lies in shallow water. I keep trying to pull her up with the chain so she can breathe, but she keeps falling back into the water. The Captain is watching this with pleasure. He comes over, gives me a gloating look, and with his boot on her throat pushes the girl under the water. I'm overcome with grief and rage as I watch her drown. I am helpless.

My patient knew that this dream was a direct response from her psyche to the session the day before in which she had risked the painful memories from her early childhood and also her need for my empathy which these memories evoked. What she didn't know was how much an unknown part of her "hated" this vulnerability and how deeply divided she was about the shameful aspects of her past. Her dream depicts this splitting as the malevolent Captain and his sadistic relationship to the young girl, chained to the dream ego, who he is "killing." Here we have the archaic bipolar structure of the self-care system—innocent victim and violent perpetrator, Dis and his gated city of Limbo, full of innocents.

In our specimen dream, the innocent remainder of a previously whole self (the young girl chained to our dreamer) seems to carry the vulnerable pre-traumatic aspect of her true self. This personal spirit is the mysterious essence of animation in the personality, the innocent core that Winnicott called the secret "true self" and that I have called the imperishable personal spirit or soul. Unfortunately, however, for the trauma survivor, this innocent carrier of the vital spark is under a spell cast by the Devil, and one of the things Dis seems to want is for this enspirited inner self to remain disembodied (unconscious) forever.

We see this in the patient's dream. The struggle for embodiment is represented by the patient's efforts to pull her young companion out of the water *so she can breathe.* Both the patient and I realized that this imagery related to her breathing difficulty when her sadness "came up" from the unconscious in the previous session. Some part of her (the Captain) clearly did not want the vulnerable feelings related to her trauma to "surface." His role was to "kill" these feelings and to kill her access to them. He thus personified her resistance to *embodied affect,* and his paralyzing effect in her body was to literally stop her from breathing.

In the session preceding the dream, as I asked the patient to breathe into her emerging pain, more affect could surface, but she could only get out a few muffled sobs and then the "Captain" (Dis) would constrict her throat once again and her psychic numbness would return. Here we see an important feature of the archetypal defense. As an anti-embodiment factor (remembering Lucifer's rebellious origins as a refusal to embody), the archaic defense works against the natural process through which the soul embodies—a process Winnicott (1970: 261–70) called "indwelling" or "personalization." In trauma, there is a reversal of indwelling, a splitting of affect from image and the corresponding splitting off of the psyche from the soma, sending the soul back into the unconscious where, we might imagine, it remains in Limbo until re-embodiment is possible.

This dream is a beautiful example of the mytho-poetic nature of dreams in general. It takes the two conflicted sides of Diane's inner life—wounded vulnerability on the one hand (young girl) and a harsh "killing" attitude on the other (Captain)—and weaves a story out of these polar opposites that puts the dream ego right in the middle of a tense drama, yet to be resolved.

Of course, the dream could be looked at differently. It is possible that the dream confirms my worry that I had pushed Diane "too fast" into her feelings. Looked at from this angle, my patient may have experienced me as the dark "Captain" in her dream, despite my therapeutic intentions to help her hold her vulnerability long enough to feel it. Through this interpretive lens, she would have experienced me as shaming her, "pushing her under water," and then dispassionately watching her struggle, ready to humiliate her and "drown" her vulnerable self.

However, in the next session my patient gave no indication of having experienced me in such a shaming way. She had actually thought a great deal about our session together and had realized that she really *was* afraid of her feelings and had resisted her tears throughout the session—tried to "push them underwater" as the Captain did in her dream.

Our mutual understanding of her dream, together with her future therapy, helped my patient become more tolerant of her dependent inner childhood self, and as our work progressed, she was able to risk more embodied affect, softening her armored defensive structure represented by the vigilant, destructive Captain. Her affect-tolerance increased. The

outer world (including the transference) and her private, shame-filled inner world were more available to each other and her previously "malignant" innocence began to transform. Some of her outer causes lost their compulsive quality.

Dis and embodiment

An important facet of this vignette is the way my simple inquiry about where my patient's feelings were experienced *in her body*, opened up her deeper feelings and dissociated self states. Because the self-care system is mostly a mental "top-down" defensive structure, affectively toned questions directed to sensations in the body can have the effect of bypassing the controlling demon of mentation (Dis), allowing the fugitive vulnerable feelings deep in the body a chance for expression.

Because Dis is part of the pathological "mind object" (Corrigan and Gordon, 1995), and because the "child" in the system is usually a personification of affect *in the body*, a psychotherapeutic approach that attends to embodied affect is very helpful in cases such as Diane. Such a body-sensitive approach proceeds from the understanding that past trauma and its defenses will be encoded in present physiological states such as breath, gestures, muscular tension, averted gaze, etc. and not in higher cortical regions where they could be recovered as explicit memories (see Schore, 2003a, 2003b). By seeking to work directly with these more body-based, *implicit memories*, we help patients like Diane become more aware of their internal sensations and perceptions.

Among the many contributors to this new way of working with trauma are Bonnie Badenoch's (2008) *Being a Brain-wise Therapist* in which she explores the practical significance (with many clinical examples) of Daniel Siegel's 'Interpersonal Neurobiology; also, Ogden *et al.*'s (2006) "Sensorimotor Approach" to psychotherapy, which provides many useful ways in which body-sensitive techniques can be incorporated into conventional psychoanalysis; and Sharon Stanley's (2010) work, which is designed to access traumatic states in the body through a gentle "pendulation" between states of high anxiety and states of homeostatic balance and security.

All these new techniques derive from an understanding of the "implicit" patterns of attachment-relationship that become wired into "invariant models" within the unconscious of the child. These mental models or what Bowlby (1969) called "schemas" stay in place below the level of consciousness and influence our perceptions of the world and of relationships. The trauma survivor has a particularly rigid set of these mental models. In his or her brain, strong neural networks have been formed that encode repeated traumatic experiences with a caregiver so that "states" of shame, for example, become embedded as a "trait" of shame (see Siegel, 2007).

Normally, implicit memory evolves—through the integrative activity of the brain, and especially the *hypocampus*[1]—to encoding in "higher" cortical centers and hence to explicit memory. This leads further, with the aid of left-hemispheric integration, to narrative memory—the ability to identify an emotional experience as belonging to the past and to articulate it in words as part of one's personal story. This process is part of the humanization of archetypal energies that Winnicott calls "personalization."

But in traumatized individuals, the psyche's defenses, especially dissociation (Dis), do not allow for this "higher" differentiation or integration. Instead, the whole nervous system is flooded with stress hormones (adrenalin, cortisol, etc.) and these block the hypocampus from its normal integrative function (see Siegel, 2007). Bodily sensations and primitive emotional states are left encoded in the right hemisphere (Schore, 2011) and in implicit memory only, without the normal integrative activity that would facilitate its "translation" into higher cortical registration, into left/right hemispheric balance and hence into explicit—and later narrative—memory. Hence, when implicit memory erupts as a flashback from the past, it is experienced in the immediacy of the moment—stripped of its context and without the modulating influence of higher cortical integration that gives the child a sense of his/her experience in context, and *as a whole.*

In addition to flooding the brain with stress hormones and putting its integrative activity out of commission, dissociation (Dis) operates by splitting the child's attention at moments of overwhelming affect, so that the child's whole experience is fragmented and compartmentalized. For example, the child being sexually violated by a family member may concentrate so strongly on a focal image in the visual field—perhaps a pattern on the wallpaper—that a state of auto-hypnosis (trance) is generated. Bodily pain is no longer in focus but the pattern is (see Siegel, 2007). The sensation and/or meaning of the violation falls into the background—into "implicit memory." Thus, in trauma, the fragments of experience are laid down in implicit memory only. Remaining undifferentiated, they also accrue archaic and typical (archetypal) enhancements. They are amplified by the collective patterns that organized the deep layer of the psyche and, hence, they become all the more powerful, operating totally out of awareness.

These neurobiological implications help us to understand why purely verbal, interpretive methods often do not "reach" the implicit memories of early trauma, all encoded in the right hemisphere, out of reach of rational words. They underscore the importance of working more closely with affects-in-the-body during psychotherapy. Also, traumatic memories, encoded in the right hemisphere and in the body's musculature, are more likely to be available within the intimacies of the affective *relationship* between patient and therapist, as they create and re-create their own narrative history—their own embodied story.

According to Schore (2003b: 96), Wilkinson (2006: 147–9), and others, affects-in-the-body—encoded as the implicit memories of early trauma—will be more available through the mytho-poetic image-language of *dreams, metaphor, and poetry* than through the rational-interpretive language of insight (left brain). This is the language of the right hemisphere, and we now know that the right hemisphere is the only hemisphere "on line" in the early months of life. Hence this is where early trauma is encoded. Such mytho-poetic language taps a *daimonic* or *collective* stratum of the psyche—one descriptive of those "intermediate" beings and processes described by Diotima to Socrates as "half-way" between the human and divine; half-way between the ego and the unconscious; half-way between the left and right hemispheres; halfway between the inner and outer worlds where (one eye looking out and one eye looking in) the real truth of all stories resides.

As I have emphasized in this book, this intermediate space between mind and body is also uniquely where the human soul seems to "live." In trauma work, therefore, we must learn to speak a soulful language, because it is uniquely the human soul that is threatened with annihilation by early trauma in a child's life. I will continue to illustrate such "mytho-poetic" attention and reverie in the various clinical vignettes throughout this book.

Further descent into the nether regions

To return to Dante's great poem, further into Hell (Circles two through five) the torture starts. As the poets traverse the circles of the incontinent, the lustful, the gluttonous, and the angry, they pass among the shades of those in various forms of torment. Sinners are pelted by freezing rain and flayed by the claws of monstrous beasts. Others writhe in unending torment in the dark, slimy waters of the River Styx.

After the Fourth and Fifth Circles the pilgrim and his guide finally cross the River Styx and arrive at the gates of Dis. The tower gate is guarded by the fallen angels who accompanied Lucifer in his fall from Heaven. Virgil tries to bargain with them but they slam the gate in his face and the two poets are barred from going further. They must wait for divine assistance. Then the furies appear and threaten to unleash Medusa on the two poets, whereupon Virgil covers Dante's eyes so he is not turned to stone.

Finally an angel arrives. In Figure 3.5, we see Blake's vision of the Heavenly Messenger arriving with a noise like thunder in a kind of whirlwind, emphasizing the transpersonal powers that must intervene to open the gates of nether Hell. This resplendent angel rebukes the demons and the gates are opened.

Digression on angels at the gate of Dis

In Chapter 1 of this book, I recounted a remarkable story about an "angel at the gate of Dis," i.e., the gate of dissociation. It was the story of the little girl

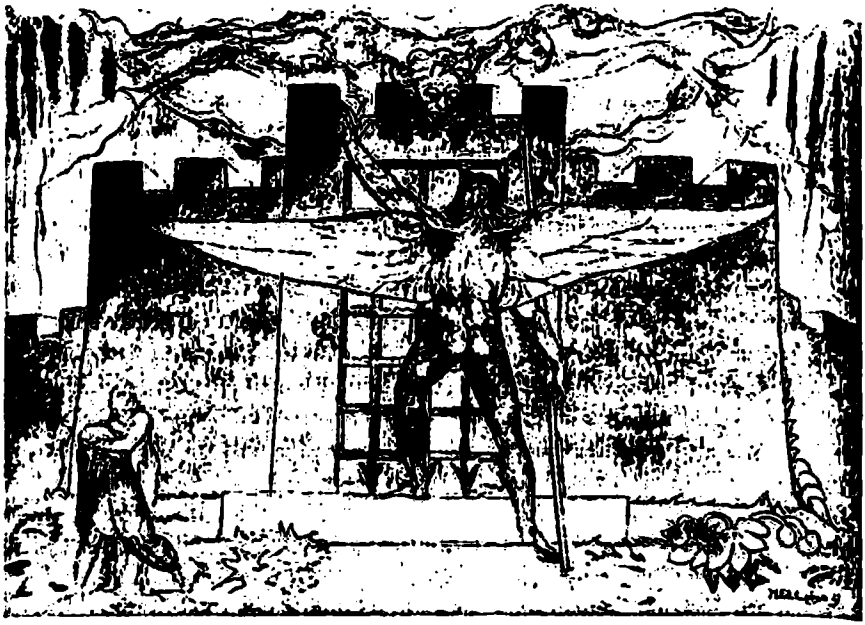


Figure 3.5 Angel opening the "Gate of Dis."

who was asked to carry a message to her father in his study, but returned to her mother in tears to report that the "angel" wouldn't allow her to enter. We might say that this "angel" oversaw her dissociation at that moment because the full reality of her father's death from a heart attack could not be allowed "in" to her ego-consciousness, i.e., could not be experienced.

This story, with its angel at the gate of dissociation, illustrates the remarkable daimonic powers that are recruited by the defensive system in its efforts to save the essential core of a person's aliveness from trauma. The appearance of the angel at this crucial moment in the little girl's life shows the "wisdom" of the psyche in a beautiful way. To me this is a small miracle that links the work we do in the consulting room with the great symbol systems enshrined in the world's great religions.

But according to Dante, there are two angels at the Gate of Dis. In Figure 3.6 we see Dore's image of the great nihilist himself, glowering from his icy pit *inside* the gate. As a kind of "thought-experiment" we might ask which great angel is it that opens the gates of dissociation? The angel of light in Figure 3.5 or the dark fallen angel of Figure 3.6? Of course, it is both. The light and dark angels represent the light and dark side of the same archetypal defense. The great "protector" in the self-care system is also a "persecutor" as I have emphasized elsewhere (Kalsched, 2006), and both are *daimonic* entities, partaking of a spiritual reality. Both belong to the collective layer of the psyche with its archetypal images and affects.

THE JUDECCA—LUCIFER
"Behold Dis, and behold the place / Where thou with fortitude must arm thyself"
(Inf. XXXIV 20-21)

Figure 3.6 Brooding Dis as Dante and Virgil confront the "Emperor of the Sorrowful Realm."

The descent continued: encounter with Dis

So to return to our story: With the aid of the Heavenly Messenger, the poets enter the City of Dis. There they find themselves on a great plain covered with the burning tombs of the Heretics, whose specters arise menacingly from their graves. In the Seventh Circle they find violent sinners boiling in their own blood. Others are killed by lightning.

Panderers and seducers are scourged by demons while flatterers flop in pools of excrement. Monstrous reptiles threaten from ditches and thieves are devoured by monsters growing out of their own bodies. In Circle 8, the Sowers of Discord are decapitated (see Figure 3.7). Everywhere there is imagery of splitting and dismemberment.

Finally, the poets reach the Ninth Circle and descend into the pit and the frozen Lake of Cocytus, holding the souls of the traitors frozen in the ice. Cocytus, the "river of mourning," is the fourth great infernal river. So beneath all the layers of hell, beneath the fires, at the center of the lost soul and the lost city lies the silence and rigidity of eternally frozen cold.

Figure 3.7 Images of splitting: decapitated sinner contemplates his own severed head.

Of their encounter with Dis, Dante exclaims:

> I thought I saw a shadowy mass appear; Then shrank behind my leader from the blast ... I stood (with fear I write it) where at last The shades, quite covered by the frozen sheet, Gleamed through the ice like straws in crystal glassed.... And when we had come so far that it seemed right to my dear master, he should let me see that creature fairest once of the sons of light, He moved him from before me and halted me, and said "Behold now Dis! Behold the place where thou must steel thy soul with constancy."
>
> (Alighieri, 1978: 285)

Dante's response:

> How cold I grew, how faint with fearfulness, Ask me not, Reader; I shall not waste breath telling what words are powerless to express; This was not life, and yet it was not death; If thou hast wit to think how I might fare bereft of both, let fancy aid thy faith.
>
> (Alighieri, 1978: 285)

From this deep abyss on their journey, the poets have one final task. They must clamber along the hairy body of Dis until, passing through the

groin area into the nethermost center of the earth. From thence, the path leads upwards and they emerge into a rocky cavern, following the stream of Lethe until it brings them out on the island of Mount Purgatory, where the hope "laid down" as they entered the Inferno is recovered again as they engage the voluntary suffering of the Purgatorio. They have now been released from the "God" who turned their suffering into violence and now find themselves in the precincts of that "God" who turns their violence into suffering. Purgatory lies ahead, and the second book of the *Comedia* begins. In the accompanying illustration by Dore (Figure 3.8) the poets emerge into the upper world to see the stars for the first time. Hope returns and with it a new form—a tolerable form—of suffering. We will expand on these two forms of suffering in the concluding section of this chapter.

Encountering Dis up close in the transference

The patient in this example was a depressed middle-aged woman with a history of serious early neglect and abuse, whose tyrannical inner "voice" (Dis) constantly belittled and attacked her for even the smallest steps in the direction of a creative impulse or a gesture of self-expression. "You're an asshole ... you're sick ... you're stupid ... you're psychologically retarded ... you should kill yourself," etc. As I got to know this inner attacker, I was reminded of Neville Symington's (1993: 71) warning that

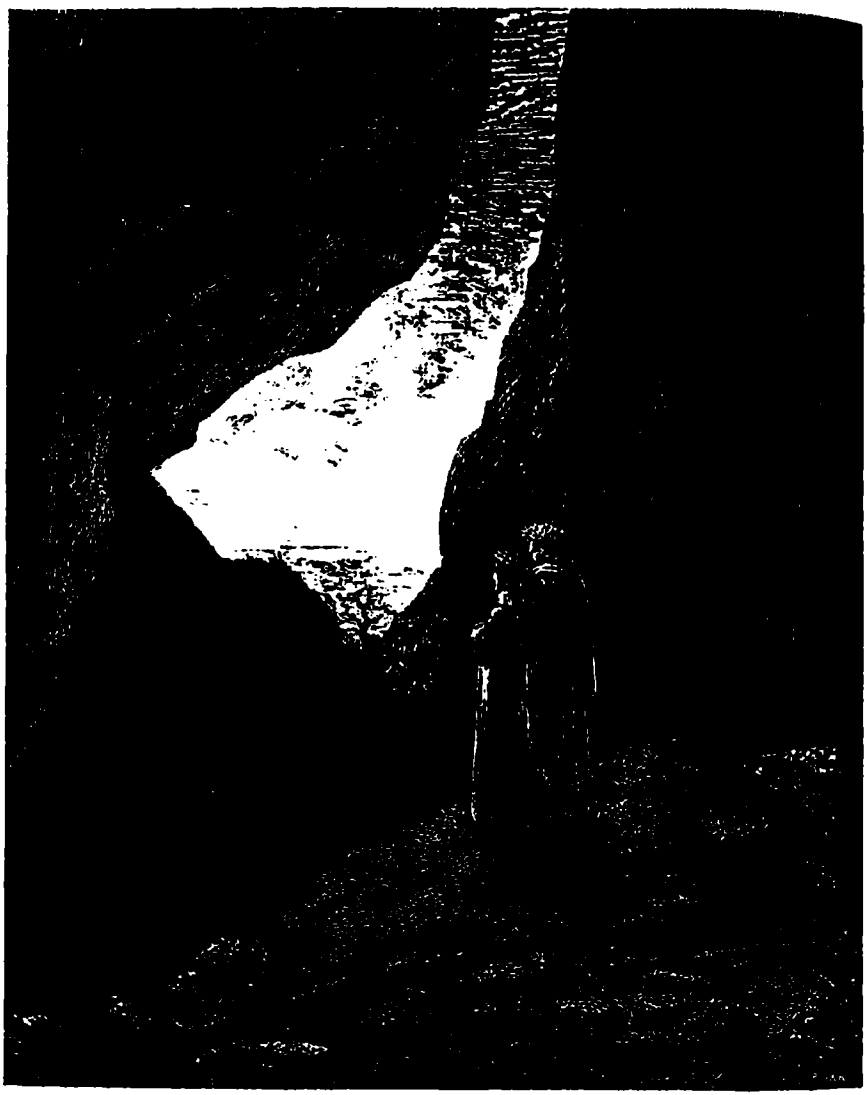
> Any step towards the *lifegiver* brings knowledge. If the infantile spontaneous emotional self is touched, if some contact is made, then this allows a glimpse of the terrible tyrant that has smothered that self and not allowed it to come into contact with anything life-enhancing, and this often generates despair.

Not infrequently my patient would attribute such attacks to me or others she idealized, but each time the voice occurred, we were able to find a fragment of anxiety associated with some hope or vulnerability she was beginning to risk and her chastising "voice" was dead-set against this hope. We could witness this and talk about it. She began to understand how the defense worked and began to develop an observing ego that was not totally identified with the voice of self-immolation.

The following dream occurred toward the end of the second year of her analysis, before my extended summer vacation.

> I come upon a man wrestling with a woman. I don't seem to be frightened for the woman because the scene has an almost ritual quality. The man cuts off the woman's left forefinger at the knuckle, then goes after the right forefinger. By this time I'm the

woman and can feel the man's knife cutting through my finger—without much pain—and probing for the ligament that connects the first two digits which he was trying to sever from the rest of the finger and hand. He was apparently unsuccessful, because the last image of the dream is of the otherwise severed finger hanging by the ligament. I have the thought that this could be re-attached.



THE WAY TO THE UPPER WORLD
The Guide and I into that hidden road / Now entered, to return to the bright world
(*Inf.* XXXIV, 133, 134).

Figure 3.8 The poets return to the brighter world.

My patient had no associations to the man or woman. To the forefingers she associated "making a point'" and talked about how she was becoming, in fact, increasingly confident about speaking her mind and expressing her point of view in various social and professional settings. And then, quite spontaneously, she said, "yes and just as I get more confident about my feelings and really want to work on them, you go away again!" After a moment of silence I replied "And cut you off?" She laughed and said "Yes, and for the second time! You took a long time off last summer too."

In this brief exchange my patient and I had interpreted her dream with its by now familiar dismembering defense. Our spontaneous repartee proved to be a very important communication, because my patient was not accustomed to letting on that our work and the transference relationship which sustained it was important to her on a feeling level. Her spontaneous remark had exposed this and opened up the meaning of the dream. She then acknowledged both how hurt and how angry she felt in her fantasies about my leaving and how "chicken" she felt about mentioning this, out of a need to protect me. After this, it also came out for the first time directly how much she would miss me and our work together and how this time my leaving didn't seem quite as bad—that a ligament was still intact, linking the otherwise severed digit. This corresponded to her feeling that there was a deeper connection—both between us and in herself—and this would help her survive the long break.

So here again we have a dream representation of Dis—the strange man cutting off parts of her body, attacking the ligaments (links) which she associates with self-expression. The man with the knife is a "stranger," i.e., someone who is still unknown (not yet personalized) with whom she wrestles, sustaining a wound. This stranger's dark intention would seem to be the dismemberment of her expressed feelings, including feelings for me in the transference (although he now allows some connection to remain in the ligament).

In my response to her pointed remark, I stepped into the shoes of this archetypal figure, as it were (took on the projection) and she then had a brief experience of *wrestling with me* in the transference. In this way, the archetypal defense, already moderated to the point where she could risk a spontaneous gesture, was further personalized. The dismembering Dis could now be engaged as he was projected onto me and then re-integrated. Vulnerable feelings could be admitted. Some of the anger directed back into the inner world at her loving feelings and her "neediness" could be released outwardly and find expression in her honest acknowledgment of anger at me for "abandoning her." In this way, archetypal affects and energies were humanized and became more ego-syntonic.

This example illustrates how the establishment of a playful space in the transference re-establishes the transitional space foreclosed in the patient's

early life, leading to her archetypal self-care system with its splitting and encapsulating defenses. The dark stranger with the knife, whose job it has been to "cut her off" from vulnerable feelings of neediness and dependency attacking the links (ligaments) of her expressive selfhood, no longer needed to sever all the links but left a *ligament* that could be re-attached. One is reminded that, etymologically, the Latin verb *ligare* means to yoke, bind, or link, and appears after the prefix "re" in the Latin *religio* from which we get our word "religion." The suggestion is that reconnecting to the source-ground of our own feeling responses means reconnecting to the inner soul-child who has been cut off in a "psychic retreat" (Steiner, 1993), and this constitutes an *ensouling* of the personality.

This etymological coincidence is no accident, because in working through early trauma and its archetypal defenses we are, in effect, slowly freeing the preternatural powers of the collective unconscious from their dark "fallen" roles as dismembering demons to play their larger life-enhancing role as the integrative, link-restoring "better angels of our nature."

Conclusion: two kinds of suffering

By facing Dis directly, Dante and Virgil reach the depth of their descent and the moment of urgency in which true change is possible. By analogy, this moment means facing the full measure of terrifying affect that has led to dissociation and *deadening* in the patient's life. Dante says that his feeling is inexpressible. The sight of Dis renders him half dead and half alive. This is precisely the effect of dissociation on the trauma survivor. The challenge for the psychoanalytic pilgrim is to re-visit this hell of unthinkable trauma one step at a time, re-experiencing the unbearable affect within a window of tolerance, aided by the witnessing function, the compassion, and the interpretive understanding of the analyst. When this painful process has been negotiated, the nature of suffering changes.

Helen Luke describes this transition in terms of the poets leaving the *Inferno* and entering the *Purgatorio*:

> What we experience at this moment is a total transformation of the nature of the darkness itself—or rather of our attitude towards it. As long as we seek to escape from our various "hells" into freedom from pain, we remain irremediably bound; we can emerge from the pains of Hell in one way only—by accepting another kind of suffering, the suffering which is purging, instead of meaningless damnation. The souls in *the Purgatorio* suffer the same kind of torments as those in the Inferno; but they suffer with the willing acceptance instead of with bitter resentment.
>
> (Luke, 2003: 49)

Luke (1995) elaborates further on these two kinds of suffering:

> True suffering belongs to innocence, not guilt.... Deeply ingrained in the infantile psyche is the conscious or unconscious assumption that the cure for depression is to replace it with pleasant, happy feelings, whereas the only valid cure for any kind of depression lies in the acceptance of real suffering.
>
> (Luke, 1995: 57)

Here, Luke is talking about developing an increasing tolerance for one's own affects, especially those affects that have erupted around early trauma. When my patient Diane began to experience a portion of the unbearable humiliation she had suffered at the hands of her father and had the courage to "go into it" with myself as her "guide" the whole structure of Hell opened up to her—the persecutory tyrant (Captain) and her innocent girlish imprisoned self, who had felt such unspeakable pain on the occasion of her father's humiliating denigrations. The "innocent" part of her began to suffer. This can only happen as the defensive "system" relaxes because its whole "purpose" has been to keep the innocent part of the self—the seed of the soul—separated from the suffering necessary for transformation.

In the true suffering of these painful affects, the crypt of Hell is opened and Dis' innocent prisoners (heretofore protected in Limbo) are slowly introduced to the unbearable pain that originally split them off from the rest of the personality. Ironically, as this happens, it also liberates Dis (although this clinical fact is not part of Dante's story). Dis' whole reason for being has been to keep the innocent core of the self out of further suffering. Now, with innocence beginning to suffer experience, Dis has less and less to "do." Leaving the Inferno means de-potentiating the defensive structure of the self-care system—overcoming Dis himself, or liberating him to perform his normal discriminating functions. The "false god who turns suffering into violence" is being slowly replaced by (or transformed into) "the true god who turns violence into suffering." This is why in Purgatory Dis is absent and there are none of the usual victim–perpetrator dynamics so prominent in the judgmental punishing atmosphere of the Inferno—no explanations, excuses in the name of innocence, or blaming of others. Instead, there is a simple acceptance of the human condition, made possible by the previous long journey with a witnessing partner.

Accepting the human condition has not been possible for the trauma survivor, because its realities—which are difficult enough even in a "facilitating environment" (Winnicott)—have shocked and overwhelmed the survivor's capacities to metabolize unspeakably painful affective experience, thus requiring dissociative defenses. A living Hell is created and in its crypt something of life's potential is preserved and protected from further suffering, but at the price of a violently chopped-up inner world. Whole experience is disintegrated and the soul is "sold to the Devil." In this way

the realities of the human condition are avoided and the survivor becomes, in Grotstein's terminology an "Orphan of the Real."

When such an "Orphan of the Real" has the courage to make a witnessed descent into his or her inner Hell, and begins to consciously take responsibility for the self-loathing, the shame, and the deep sense of "original sin" that infect the poor sinners in their inner Limbos, then everything changes. He or she finds his or her way through the darkness to an emerging light. This is a spiritual experience, a spirituality that inheres in reality itself, the reality of what it is to be human, something that has not been tolerable until now. Helen Luke (1995: 59) puts it this way:

> the minute we accept objectively the guilt and shame, the innocent part of us begins to suffer, the weight becomes a sword. We bleed, and the energy flows back into us on a deeper and more conscious level. What is more ... there is always an implicit universal meaning even in the carrying of small miseries. *Every time a person exchanges neurotic depression for real suffering, he or she is sharing to some small degree in the carrying of the suffering of mankind, in bearing a tiny part of the darkness of the world.* Such a one is released from his small personal concerns into a sense of meaning.... Thus the smallest act, may "have an influence, as the Chinese sage puts it, at a distance of a thousand miles" (emphasis added).

Luke (1995: 61–2) ends her remarkable essay with a fitting comment about the importance of such conscious suffering for our time in history:

> In these days when the media bring to us daily the sight and sound of the appalling sufferings of the innocent, we all have great need of reminders of the only way in which we can contribute to the healing of the terrible split between curse and blessing in our time.
>
> The poets and great storytellers of all ages come to our aid. When one man takes up responsibility for his blindness without any false guilt, even in the smallest things, the self pity and the projections of blame onto others or onto God drop away, and the blessing beyond the opposites is strengthened in our environment. It seems infinitesimal, but in Jung's words it may be the "makeweight that tips the scales." ... It happens not through our willed efforts to improve the world, fine and right though these may be on another level, but to the degree to which the curse and the blessing have been experienced consciously as one in the psyche of the individual. It is an experience which, as C.G. Jung wrote in *Mysterium Conjunctionis*, reaches "the individual in stillness—the individual who constitutes the meaning of the world."

4

TRAUMA, TRANSFORMATION, AND TRANSCENDENCE

The case of Mike

> God wants to be born in the flame of man's consciousness, leaping ever higher, and what if this has no roots in the earth—if it is not a house of stone where the fire of God can dwell but a wretched straw hut that flares up and vanishes. Could God then be born? One must be able to suffer God. That is the supreme task for the carrier of ideas. He must be the advocate of the earth.... God needs man in order to become conscious just as he needs limitation in time and space. Let us therefore be for him limitation in time and space—an earthly tabernacle.
>
> (Jung, 1973: 65)

Introduction

In this chapter I hope to weave together the clinical vignettes and dream imagery presented in the previous chapters with new material from a six-year analysis of a male patient whom I will call "Mike."[1] The theme of the inner soul/child which we saw in single "flash pictures" in the previous cases, emerges here as a "moving picture," i.e., a sequence of dreams showing a distinct evolution as psychotherapy progresses. So also, the violent negative forces pictured as "Dis" in the previous chapter seem to undergo a transformation, becoming more benevolent and humanized. Overall this case illustrates how an individual man found the courage to "suffer God" i.e., to wrestle with the powerful daimonic forces of his own survival system until these forces became re-aligned in the interest of his own true—albeit limited—life.

I will try to tell this story "with one eye open, looking out, and one eye closed, looking in," honoring the binocular vision presented in the Introduction of this book. As the case unfolds, I hope to demonstrate how an integrated center which Jung called the Self was born in the "earthly tabernacle" of this man's soul over the course of a six-year analysis, and how this experience led him (and me) to a profound experience of a human/divine ground that supports us all "between the worlds."

This struggle was out-pictured in a remarkable series of dreams tha portrayed both Mike's inner and outer situation. My patient brought a least one dream to each analytic session and through them we were lec into all the relevant issues in his history and daily life, including a gooc deal of dissociated material from his traumatic background. "In each o us," said Jung,

> there is another, whom we do not know. He speaks to us in dreams and tells us how differently he sees us from the way we see ourselves. When, therefore, we find ourselves in a difficult situation to which there is no solution, he can sometimes kindle a light that radically alters our attitude.
>
> (Jung, 1933: para. 325, p. 153)

Jung's word for this "other whom we do not know" is the *Self*, which he borrowed from the Hindu "Atman" meaning, according to the *Oxfor English Reference Dictionary* (1996), both the *real self* and the *supreme spiritua principle*. Representing the personality's potential wholeness, the Self con stitutes an "ineffable subject of the unconscious" (Grotstein, 2000: xvii and its dialectic with the ego—or "phenomenal subject of consciousness (Grotstein, 2000: xvii)—establishes an *ego–Self axis* that guides the individ uation process. This dialectic may lead to a new and deeper center of the personality, and we will witness the evolution of this center in several o Mike's dreams.

Obviously in the limited space of a single chapter I can hope to do littl more than provide a sketch of how the ego–Self conversation evolved anc a center was consolidated in my patient's analysis. If I am not mistaken however, the process I observed seemed to occur in two discernible stages The first stage involved the emptying out (kenosis) of an archetypal–hence omnipotent—defensive structure which *prevented* any effective con versation between ego and Self. As the forgotten traumatic events in m patient's early life emerged in the form of emotionally charged drean images they showed us the defensive structure of his inner object-worl with its torture and violence. Because of the extent of early trauma in m patient's life, the emotions of this period were volcanic, and the suffering he experienced at this stage was like being crucified and torn apar between opposing forces, love vs. hate, weak vs. strong, passive vs. active masculine vs. feminine.

This seemingly necessary sacrifice on the altar of archetypal antinomie is what Jung meant by the agonizing process of "suffering God." The imagery of dreams during this period included dramatic voluntary sacri fices in which the dream ego surrendered its heroic role and gave in tc "death"—sometimes martyring itself for a lost child in need of rescue.

Then there was a second stage in the consolidation of a trans-persona center in my patient. As he and I struggled week after week, month afte

month, year after year, to help him embody, personalize, and integrate the volcanic storms of emotion which always threatened to tear him apart internally, we slowly realized that *we were not alone in this struggle.* Something deep inside the patient's psyche (and also alive in the space between us) seemed to celebrate moments of integration also. As this deep, centering agency in the psyche strengthened over time, dreams appeared which seemed to include its *intention* in their very dramatic structure.

For example, now instead of war between rival factions, a compromise peace would be struck—often mediated by a feminine figure. Churches or temples began to appear, providing a sacralized space for the dream's unfolding action. A blonde female figure named "Sympathy" played a larger and larger role. When these integrative themes or images emerged, they frequently had an aura around them which marked them as *numinous,* and the dreams in which they appeared were especially vivid and memorable. My patient began to feel held by this dream process as he and I contained it in our dialogue together. He began to wonder *who* the creator of his dreams could possibly be! He referred to "him" simply as "the dream-maker." At times of stress he now asked his dream-maker for a dream, much as he had prayed to God every night as a little boy.

If the first stage in this centering process was one of "suffering God" and being torn apart by His titanic extremes, this second stage was one of quiet revelation—of loving encounter with the poignant darkness and tragedy of the human condition—yet also its equally poignant joy and redemptive light. One of the hallmarks of this new sense of himself was an appreciation of beauty—the beauty of the earth, the beauty of his wife, of his boys, and of life in general. Mike began to get a glimpse into the deeper meaning of his experience—the story embodying his true biography—now spanning the space between two worlds, not just embedded in externality. This binocular glimpse of new meaning had a spiritual quality, a humbling prayerful quality of "meeting God."

Jung described such moments in the following way:

> When a summit of life is reached, when the bud unfolds and from the lesser the greater emerges, then, as Nietzsche says, "One becomes Two," and the greater figure which one always was but which remained invisible appears to the lesser personality with the force of a revelation. He who is truly and hopelessly little will always drag the revelation of the greater down to the level of his littleness, and will never understand that the day of judgment for his littleness has dawned. But the man who is inwardly great will know that the long expected friend of his soul, the immortal one, has now really come, "to lead captivity captive" (Ephesians 4:8); that is, to seize hold of him by whom this immortal had always been confined and held prisoner, and to make his life flow into that greater life.
>
> (Jung, 1939: para. 217, p. 121)

First meeting

Mike came into my office for his first appointment like a whirlwind—larger than life, full of a spirit that reminded me of a wild stallion. Beautifully built and comfortable in his body, he settled, like Adonis, into the chair opposite me and began to ask about the dream analysis he'd heard I practiced. Dreams, he said, were one avenue on his spiritual journey through the "New Age" that he had not tried, and he thought this might be helpful because a lot of panic and fear was coming up lately for no apparent reason. These disturbing feelings made him feel separate and alone, alienated from the spiritual peace he had felt at other times in his life—especially at an ashram in India. He was married, with a four-year-old son, Willie, and another child soon to be born. He loved his son a great deal and spent a lot of time with him. Himself the middle child in a family of three, with a younger brother and older sister, Mike had grown up in a repressive German Catholic family, his father a tyrannical ex-army man and his mother more emotional and closer to him, now deceased. He was currently employed as a high-school coach and guidance counselor.

"As a child I wanted to die," Mike said, interrupting a pregnant silence.

> When I was two, after my brother was born, I seem to have become desperate.... I was inconsolable when my parents left—had repeated temper tantrums. They'd shame me for crying—call me a baby. I started getting into trouble. I was willful and lazy. They tried to break my will. They'd put me on a dog-chain in the yard. My mother shaved my head once to teach me a lesson. They had to pay babysitters extra to sit me. The worst was on weekends when my fights with them would escalate. They'd threaten all sorts of punishments. Then they'd pack my bags and drive me to the orphanage! I'd be screaming until I couldn't breathe and then I'd black-out or go numb. Later I couldn't contain my rage. Kids teased me and I was always in fights. I'd "blow up." I could take on kids twice my size and win. School was a nightmare. My learning disabilities made it impossible. I wanted to read from right to left! I "flunked" the first grade. I couldn't learn. I cheated on tests—counterfeited my report cards. Always felt stupid.... I started stealing when I was 10. By 15, I was arrested for over 50 felonies—mostly burglaries. I'd break into the school at night and walk the halls—sometimes I'd shit on the desks of teachers. I hated them. I was a very good criminal. To this day my father has never spoken to me about that. My mother, who always bailed me out of jail, would drag me to some priest for confessional each time. I hated those priests.

Coming up for breath from this almost affect-less recitation of negative "accomplishments," Mike continued:

> I channeled my rage into athletics ... and girls—boxing, wrestling, football, fucking. Got sent to military school. I was good at sports—177 pounds and an all-American halfback ... got injured alot but I'd play through the pain. I had an incredible tolerance for pain. Even my coach was impressed. I got that from my father. He'd line me and my brother up for our regular beatings—one hit with the paddle for every grade beneath an "A" on my report card. My brother always broke down and cried. I envied him. I never cried. I wouldn't let him get to me. I'd even provoke fights to master my fear and pain ... never could trust anyone except myself. The kids called me Rocky.
>
> I got thrown out of military school for having a girl in my room. I was headed for Viet Nam, but then I broke my back in a log-rolling accident. After that I went to India—always searching—lived in caves at ashrams—found a guru who betrayed me—got raped and beaten in Iran—climbed part way up Everest—ended up in Afghanistan—got caught dealing in the black market—I'd do scams—was thrown in jail. The Red Cross is still looking for me over there—I finally came home two years later for my sister's wedding. Mother said she'd disown me if I didn't. It was quite a scene. I was about 110 lbs and my hair stood out in all directions like someone had plugged me into a socket! A priest took an interest in me—got me a job in Haight Ashbury working with homeless kids! I really felt for those kids—did a lot of good work there—screwed around alot. Sex was compulsive, insatiable ... had to fuck a new woman every night—would get crazy if I didn't have it. Later I met my wife on the staff there. She helped me get a job in education and coaching. I settled down—moved out here 5 years ago. Had a little boy, Willie ... can't believe how much I love this kid ... it makes me really vulnerable ... uncomfortable.

As Mike left this first session I realized I had just spent an hour with a very unusual, almost mythic person—someone in whom the life-force burned very brightly—often too brightly for the container he had so far developed for holding this fire. I wrote in my clinical notes at that time:

> What an enormous Spirit!—uncontained by reality-limits—manic and inflated with archetypal energy—like the Irish Hero Cuchulainn with his rages and warp-spasms who could defeat a whole army single handedly. Why do I feel such a tremendous connection to this man? He's a true seeker ... so alive! Where's his pain? I hope I'm up to this!

Comment on the basic split of early trauma

From this brief description we see how the fateful combination of a hypersensitive, hyper-active disposition in a young child, combined with unavailable, insensitive, or punitive parental care leads to trauma. Trauma is by definition unbearable pain—in other words, affect that cannot be metabolized by the psyche's normal symbolic process. Interpersonally, this means a breakdown in those inter-human mediational processes through which the child's volcanic affects (love and hate) become humanized, metabolized, and rendered into language by those caring for him. If these affects are too strong, or the parent's "holding capacity" too weak—as was clearly the case with Mike—a psychic breakdown is threatened. This must be avoided at all costs and so primitive defenses arrive to "switch off" the ego's capacity to register the overwhelming feelings of pain and depressive anxiety. In order to accomplish this, as Ronald Fairbairn (1981: 115) has noted, *the psyche appears to use its archaic aggression as the agent of self-splitting.* This inevitably involves "attacks on linking" (Bion, 1965; Grotstein, 1981: 91–107) and leads to a dissociation between libidinal and anti-libidinal elements in the inner world and the corresponding impoverishment of the ego. The various elements of unified experience, i.e., affect, sensation, rational knowledge upon which flexible ego functioning depends, are fragmented. Integrated feeling-experience is henceforth prevented.

The resulting architecture of the inner world is then bifurcated between a grandiose omnipotent (archetypal) defensive structure on the one hand, which aggressively persecutes (while protecting) a mortified, humiliated, wounded "innocent" child-self on the other, in order to keep it "in," i.e., prevent its direct participation in life. This bipolar structure—what I have called the self-care system—is simultaneously infantile and inflated, both divine child and divine guardian, weak and strong, male and female, victim and persecutor in one. Whatever else we might say about it, this structure appears to be the way that trans-personal agencies from the collective psyche rescue the crushed spirit of trauma's victims.

One of the inevitable results of this self-splitting in early trauma is an ego which is suspended between divine agencies, light and dark, and is left to define itself in identification with these inflating and deflating energies instead of being sustained from within. This is what Jung meant by "suffering God" or suffering the antinomies in God—both his wrath and his mercy (see Jung, 1952a). The result is what Jung (1934: para. 204, p. 98) called an "affect-ego" bounced around like a ping-pong ball alternately inflated or depressed. Instead of humanized energies mediated through dynamic interactions with loving but firm parents, the child's ego is left to alternately identify with the bipolar archetypal energies which "possess" it. In Mike's case, his ego's alternating identity was a torment. Inwardly shamed and humiliated with overwhelming feelings of inferiority, he nonetheless identified with the compensatory tough, "Rocky-like" energies

of his aggressive defense against feeling and with the narcissistic "high" these energies gave him.

Channeling the anger-demon through his powerful body, this meant superhuman feats on the athletic field and occasionally violent eruptions of rage if provoked in a fight. With women it meant superhuman sexual acts in bed but without the capacity for surrender which a creative relationship requires. Missing the normal channels for self-esteem generated in loving relationships as he grew up, Mike now garnered self-esteem from his heroic identification with "divine" energies. Looked at from one angle, this is classic narcissism; through the lens of Jungian theory, it is one of the ways the self-care system provides for the survival of the soul in trauma—albeit at the cost of ego-flexibility and stable self-esteem regulation. In this way trauma turns us into "children of God" and leaves us with a life-long struggle to become human again. If full health is to be recovered, this archetypal identity must ultimately be sacrificed; yet this sacrifice is resisted by the same survival forces that established the defense in the first place ... as we shall see in the dream process below.

Initial sessions and the recovery of lost children

In our initial sessions Mike was like a caged animal. He couldn't sit still in my office and had to pace around while he talked about his life, sometimes literally pawing my carpet like a wild stallion when he got worked up. After a couple of months he sat down and then, as he began to remember dreams, his pain began to come up. Our transference/countertransference relationship and overall rapport was very positive. He could hardly believe the richness his dreams started to offer him and his gratitude for our space together and the deepening relationship between us was touching to me too, and I genuinely began to like him, while still being a little afraid of him.

We also shared a "guy thing" which made it easier for Mike to talk about his incredible inner sense of inferiority, shame, and neediness, or how vulnerable he felt loving his little boy. It turned out that Mike and I were both passionately involved in constructing our own homes. My wife and I had bought land in the country and for reasons unknown to me, I felt compelled to build our house from scratch, using only lumber and stone from our property. Mike was doing the same thing, less than 50 miles away. As Mike hammered away on his house on weekends, so was I. We also each had all the tools and "boy-toys" needed for such a process. I had a John Deere tractor with a front-end loader and back-blade for landscaping, and he had a more modern Kuboto tractor with a front end loader and a back-hoe attachment! And of course his tractor was bigger than mine! He kidded me mercilessly about this and he loved the fact that I kidded him back. There was a lot of laughter between us and this helped in our developing rapport and trust.

As therapy began, Mike began to dream—voluminously. Responding to my suggestion that he keep careful track of these dreams, he purchased a small hand-held dictation recorder and each night, whispered his dreams into it in the middle of the night. Then, for his weekly session, he would bring the tape recorder into the session and play a dream or two back so we could process them together. The context of the dreams, his associations to them, and scraps of relevant memory seemed to emerge seamlessly in response to the sleepy almost other-worldly voice that spoke each session from the tape recorder.

Soon I began to notice that he regularly left the tape machine "on" after the dream had been reported—in other words, he began, intentionally or not, to tape a considerable portion of our sessions together. This made me uncomfortable. I felt vulnerable and exposed and wondered what my new client—still relatively unknown to me—might do with these taped sessions especially if things didn't go well in his analysis. In one early session I told him I'd noticed that he'd left the recorder "on," and asked whether he intended to do so. This led to our first uncomfortable moment.

In the ensuing conversation Mike "confessed" that he indeed had been listening to our sessions afterward, and that he liked to do this on his long ride back and forth to work every day. Our process, he said, had become important to him and this was his way of keeping the analytic work alive and his attention focused inwardly. He said he often couldn't process what came up in the sessions while actually in the office, but that afterwards he had a chance to think about things as he heard the session repeated. He especially liked our laughter together. The "music" of the session sometimes was as important as the content, he reported. Besides, he said, he could only afford to come to therapy once a week, so this was his way of getting more "bang for his buck."

As this conversation unfolded and we explored this further back and forth, I had a struggle with my own anxiety. Here was a request that would certainly bend the "frame" of the analysis, yet I had no question that my patient was completely sincere in wanting this "parameter" to deepen our process together. As we talked about this together, I felt reassured, and my sense of vulnerability and exposure lessened. It was clear that Mike was making creative use of these taped sessions and I thought this new "technique" might even accelerate our process together. After he reassured me that he would keep the tapes confidential I gave my assent to this unusual procedure and raised no further concerns.

It wasn't long before we discovered something of the early childhood vulnerability that Mike was carrying. With increasing trust between us, he was able to "let down" into the sessions and experience more of the feelings that had apparently caused him such shame as a boy. His dreams began to out-picture affects and events that he hadn't been aware of. One of the early repetitive dream themes was that of a lost person, frequently a child. For example:

> I walk into a dark room. Above in the attic I can hear a young person's voice yell out "help me!" There seems no way to get into the attic. I can hear his or her body pulled along the floor. This person is defeated, desperate, alone, isolated.

I asked Mike's associations to the feelings of defeat and desperation in the dream and the tearful memory of his mother locking him in closets returned. The darkness had terrified him and yet, at a certain point, after his sobbing stopped, he actually felt safe there. The attic was also one of his "safe places."

Soon the theme of a "lost child" gave way to more explicit imagery of why this child-self felt so defeated in the inner world. For example:

> A four-year-old boy is being tortured by a huge man and his "assistant." The man had a knife and was cutting two-inch gashes in the boy's buttocks, but the boy didn't respond. Then the assistant poured salt into these wounds ... still the boy didn't respond. Finally, the huge man pulled out a hot poker and started to brand the boy, all the while waiting for his screams. I can smell the burning flesh, but still the boy refused to respond.

Mike couldn't hold back tears telling this dream. It brought back the memory of his father's regular beatings with a wooden paddle—this time with the feelings associated with these events intact. Heretofore only the facts of these brutal punishments had been remembered. Now he remembered the feelings of shame. He felt compassion for the brutalized boy of this dream, the boy who was really himself. "At first I was always a crybaby," he said,

> If someone scolded me I'd cry—it always terribly embarrassed me. My father would tell me to stop acting like such a sissy—I'd cry some more—but then later I wouldn't cry. I refused. I kept my hurt a secret and steeled myself against the pain. Until I was five I refused to talk to them. They thought I was autistic. I think I was protecting something they couldn't take away from me. When you're little, the only power you have is to refuse satisfaction to your persecutors.

Mike's counter-dependent defense with its willful pride now emerged in the transference. It was very difficult for him to expose his vulnerability, especially with another man. Although our rapport was deepening, each newfound risk of his shame and pain led to the reactivation of his self-care system and the child inside him would be shamed or attacked. On one occasion he found himself in tears, feeling relief at being able to express his feelings, but then suddenly waves of shame hit him and he felt afraid.

Choking off his feelings, he reported the next session that at this moment in the session he had wanted "something more" from me, but was afraid to ask. He had imagined that perhaps I was disgusted with his tears. That night he had a dream which captured this moment in its own mytho-poetic drama and gave us a picture of his fierce prideful defenses.

> I'm part of a military invasion into a country like Afghanistan. There's an exchange of rifle shots. Then the scene shifts to a church full of people. A trial is taking place. One of the native fighters is on trial for trying to kill me. He's standing up front with his defense lawyer. At one point I get up and walk up to him. Everyone is very quiet ... it's such a visceral moment. We look into each other's eyes. I feel powerful and I'm waiting for him to acknowledge something ... his guilt perhaps—to ask my forgiveness. His wife is standing beside him. She's reflecting a deep sense of respect for the kind of non-verbal communication that's going on. Everyone's hushed. It looks as if there's a sense of agreement and understanding taking place. As this happens, his wife begins to relax a bit. *I'm still waiting for something more from him.* Then he moves his head in a defiant way—No!... I look back into his eyes. His face is now fixed in defiance. His wife's face now reflects a great deal of terror. She screams "don't you ever break a truce!... only this morning you were telling me and crying that you didn't want to die—knowing that this man held your life in his hands—but now there is no hope." I look one last time into this man's eyes to see if he's committed to this refusal, and return to my seat. I feel strong in my position. He couldn't give up his pride.

In this dream Mike's moment of need in the transference is recast as a contest of wills between inner figures. It is as if the proud, fierce, and "noble" Afghani part of him—that part that fights to protect its "native" land from invasion—has begun to enter into an "understanding" with the dream ego (approved by the feminine presence) but can only allow this to go so far. Then pride and defiance takes over and the truce is broken (in the session he had choked off his feelings when he imagined my disgust). The dream ego "expecting something more" is also too proud and righteous. The Afghani's wife, the feminine presence, holds the promise of reconciliation. Her face registers what is going on non-verbally—like the face of the psyche itself. She registers an appropriate terror at the splitting that occurs and speaks up passionately for the truce that she insists should be maintained.

Grief work

One of the major emotions of our early work was grief and mourning over lost time, lost opportunities, lost connections to people. Often his dreams

staged these losses in a way that evoked the necessary feelings of grief and mourning. Sometimes the dreams seemed to picture the loss of his whole childhood:

> I'm out in Colorado. I have the feeling that some catastrophe happened and I take a hang-glider and soar out over the valley to see. As I do, I see this whole town covered by rock-slides. It's destroyed and the people in it. I return and go to the telegraph office where I send a message to Ronnie, my close friend in that town asking him if he's OK ... although I know he's not. I am overcome with grief and cry to the telegraph operator who takes me into the back room where I can watch details of the disaster on TV. I leave the office and go to a dome-shaped meditation center. I feel so lonely and isolated. The absence of friends around me is almost too much to bear!

Ronnie in this dream was an old school-chum of Mike's who was a very "sweet kid," musical and poetic. Mike thought the telegraph operator was me and the TV screen he associated to the dream-screen on which we were both watching the details of that "disaster" in his early life when his own "sweet, musical, poetic" alter-ego had been buried by his defenses. With this dream and its "rock-slide" came painful memories of his nickname "Rocky." Kids would taunt him, provoke him. He'd "stuff it." He'd show his contempt for them ... wouldn't let them get to him. When he did "break" it was always in a rage. "Rage always short-circuits my mind," Mike said, "I'd lose my mind." Then after a tearful silence he said quietly: "so long ago I refused to attach again—it created a dead zone in me." As painful as these insights were, they were giving Mike a new perspective (the hang-glider) on the devastation of his early life. Slowly, a "meditation center" was developing—the first sign of that consolidating center in himself—an inward space where he could feel his feelings, a space "between the worlds."

Recovery of the lost boy/child

It was now about six months into the analytic work. Mike began to have trouble sleeping. He was flooded by feelings. At 3:00 a.m. one morning he awoke from a fading dream about a strange boy's life—one he did not want to remember. Rising from bed, he wandered downstairs and found himself staring into the red coals of the wood-burning stove in his kitchen. A memory came back of his time in India, where he had followed a funeral procession down to the Ganges river in Benares. There, on the *ghats* at the sacred burning ground, he watched a woman's body consumed by fire. As he stoked the coals in his stove, the memory of her red glowing skull stared back at him and it came to him how lost he had

been then—skinny and alone, hair down to his belt. He started to c overcome with some nameless sadness, and wandered into Willie's roo where he slowly stroked his boy's hair, filled with love and grief, stru gling with the imagery of his dream. Sitting next to the fire he wrote t dream down in pieces, crying in between. It felt consuming, powerful too much to bear.

"This dream both draws and repels me," Mike said in his next sessio It's about this boy's life.

> We're in a huge hotel. I am a body-guard for this child who seemed sacred or special in some way—almost like the Christ Child. He's in an adjoining room. Somehow the child doesn't know who he is. I can feel the presence of an evil person—someone who has come for the boy and is very close by. I become vigilant ... alert! Then there's an explosion set off by the "evil one." I run into the child's room. He's 5–7 years old. The explosion occurred next door to him. The child is in shock. I recognize him and know who he is ... the images of his life flash by me (the only one I recall is the image of this little blonde boy in school innocently curling his cowlick). I sit down next to this boy knowing the explosion was only meant to tease. If they really wanted to kill this child they would have. I also know that in the wreckage next door they'll find the destroyed, mutilated body of a girl who knew this child and the explosion had killed her. They had tortured her trying to get to this boy, but the signs of this (they knew) would be obliterated by the explosion. She had martyred herself to save this boy.
>
> I now start to shake this boy. "Who are you!" I shout. "Do you know who you are?" His eyes remain fixed, then roll up in the back of his head. My anger is mounting. I knock him to the ground. I see a little smile on his face. Perhaps I have made contact with him. But he won't look at me. I feel so frustrated. I leave the room crying out of helplessness.
>
> Then in a final part, I'm trying to tell this dream to a man upstairs. A woman present has instructed me to tell him the whole story. I'm relieved at the prospect of this but am blocked ... like I've had electro-shock or amnesia ... I can't remember his life story. I think perhaps I should go back for his history but I'll never escape the "evil one" if I do. I feel compelled to wake myself up.

Mike was very shaken by this dream, but also excited to decipher its meaning. He had several associations to the boy twirling his cowlick; he recalled a picture of himself at age three, standing on a chair next to the sink playing with a lock of his hair. He had felt compassion when he realized how "innocent" he was then. He also felt the girl who refused to

cooperate with the evil one was like his own refusal to cooperate with his parents' efforts to break his will. To the autistic child he associated his own hardened inner child—the part of him in a trance that had stopped attaching to anyone. But this child, the dream now made clear, was somehow "divine"—it held his own transcendent spirit—and Mike is now in the role of this child's guardian. The explosion set off by the Evil One he thought was like the anger that often exploded in him to cover up and defend against the pain and torture of his early life. If the explosion was big enough the scars of torture would be obliterated. Here we have a classic example of the archetypal bipolar inner structure described earlier as the trauma defense or self-care system, i.e., the Evil One and the autistic (here, "divine") child.

As Mike and I analyzed this dream together, we were both struck by the brilliance of the psyche's self-preservative operations. It was as though some part of him had laid down its life for the other part as if to protect the essence of this autistic "divine" child. Here, it seemed, was a sacrifice of the virginal feminine, in order to appease the diabolical evil murderers who were out to kill the autistic boy. Why these evil murderers were so activated at this time in Mike's analysis was a question we pondered together. Mike thought it was because of all the vulnerable feelings he was having. He thought perhaps these inflated evil bombers were now made anxious that their control over his human vulnerability was being threatened. This sounded plausible, and I wondered how the split between the archaic "evil" defenses and the "divine" trance-child would change. At this stage it was nothing but rage and fear—a kind of paranoid/persecutory structure whose mythological precursors might be the likes of those explored in Chapter 2, like Herod's response to Jesus' birth or Chronos' response to the birth of baby Zeus.

Inner and outer boys

During our first year of work together, Mike's second son, Jeremy, was born. The birth had been difficult and there was an early problem with jaundice with an uncertain prognosis. Mike and his wife, Karen, were worried sick. Again Mike was confronted by feelings of unconditional love for his infant son face to face with total helplessness as he carried out his nightly vigils over Jeremy's crib. He could only hold this love and helplessness together for so long without splitting off into his anger and controlling temper. Then he'd go out in the middle of the night and split wood.

Soon Jeremy's condition improved, but not Mike's grief and sadness. It soon became clear that Mike's outer boy was now happy and healthy, but his inner boy was not. He dreamed:

> I go into a toy store and find a young boy there with a woman. Kiddingly I pick up a knife and throw it up over the boy. He

> turns, enraged and throws the knife back at me. He runs out and takes his bowl. Still kidding him, I take a handful of oatmeal and throw it into his bowl. He's about to smash it in rage and helplessness. In that moment, my heart just breaks and I realize this is all this boy has to eat. He's an orphan with no-where to sleep and even worse, somehow he's my son! I've chased him out into a wasteland. I feel a tremendous sense of shame. I wake up sobbing uncontrollably.

This dream reminded Mike of the grief he felt sitting with parents in hi school whose child had just died from disease, or been killed in an acci dent. He could not imagine surviving such loss psychologically, and hac always felt a tremendous empathy and grief for these parents. What h now began to realize was that he was himself one of these parents in hi inner world. He too had "lost" a child, but loss of his inner child was no an actual death. Rather, it was the killing or banishment of his vulner ability by his inflated survival defenses. "I feel so badly for that little ki that was me!" Mike said in the next session. "A tremendous amount o grief sits inside me. But there's a space inside for it after last week. I use to hold my breath and cut off from my feelings, but this week I stayed wit the tears."

As though to take his feelings deeper, Mike's unconscious now supplie him with more grief to process.

> I'm doing a huge pile of white laundry. I feel overwhelmed by all this. I pick up the top and bottom of a colored bikini and fold it—apparently it belongs to a woman who's there and it's gotten mixed up in mine. We're talking ... about our lives. "Have you ever loved?" she asks. "Yes, greatly I reply" Have you ever loved and lost? she asks again. "No," I say. She looks into my eyes and says "not until today when I saw that tear in your eye." Her statement hits me like a punch. I think of my boys.

Mike woke up from this dream and began to grieve for all the peopl he'd loved and lost. He realized he'd never mourned these people an now the woman with the *colored* bikini (in his otherwise white laundr pile) seemed to want him to do this. He had felt compassion for his los friends, but it never touched him in this place of grief. Having th courage now to feel the helplessness of his losses, he also felt his lov deepen. "Grief is a part of love and love is a part of grief I guess" he said "Every emotion is priceless—a treasure, including grief." Mike's hear was opening to the multi-colored, multi-faceted feeling life he hac feared (colors are often symbolic of feelings). As if to encourage him o this path even his son Willie said to him "I didn't used to love yo Daddy, but now I do."

Recovery of the lost feminine

Although Mike's affect-tolerance was increasing and he no longer had to split off his vulnerability, his old tyrannical defenses were by no means relinquishing their control. In fact, his newfound feelings even seemed to inspire their increased activity, as in the following dream:

> A little girl had been captured. I go in search of her but get caught by the same men who kidnapped her. They put me in a little cell with a steel floor and strap electrodes all over my body. The floor is a conductor and as they turn the electricity on, the shock goes through me. I'm screaming and writhing around. Finally they take them off. A man in the cell next to me says the only man who ever got out of here could high-jump over the wall. As they return with more electrodes, I clear the wall—run into town, and meet the woman who's the little girl's mother. We talk. She says to me—from this incredible place of love—how much I must care about that little girl in order to be able to experience all that pain. I say yes. I don't understand how no-one recognizes that this torture chamber is right in the middle of this city. No-one sees it! It's so apparent!

Again the feminine takes the lead here in bringing together his love and his fear. This dream reminded Mike of how addicted he was all his life to pain—how much he would seek it out to master it—and that this had been a kind of inflated macho ritual in order to prevent himself from feeling the *psychic* pain associated with his unbearable trauma. Here we see a very different "sacrificial" drama from the one in the previous "autistic boy" dream. The superhuman evil forces are still in place with their high-voltage electrical forces, but Mike is now involved in the dream on the side of the young feminine. The extent of the defensive torture of his own vulnerability is now apparent even though "no-one sees it." Obviously Mike now sees it.

The fury of Mike's controlling defenses as his dream ego engaged his vulnerability is illustrated in another dream. Here, the dream ego is even more fully on the side of the feminine, almost to the point of a willing sacrifice:

> I've gone to visit a young female friend who's a member of a convent or cult of some kind. She's using an alias and has created a whole false impression of who she is, for protection. Now somehow I come to understand that she wants to "come clean," i.e., use her real name, and tell people who she really is. Just as I enter the scene, in comes the "Mother Superior," the head cult figure. I blurt out that the woman's real name is Pam, and in an

effort to be of help to her say also that she's an "assistant." Instead of appreciating my help, my friend is aghast! She didn't want her real name known—at least not yet. The Mother Superior had thought she was adopted and had gone to great lengths to confirm the identity my friend had given her. I start to become very anxious as her feelings of betrayal mount.

Now "Pam" is being led up a stairs to a gallows. She's a liar and is going to be sacrificed as a symbol to the other cult figures. I put on a monk's robe to conceal my own identity so I can rescue her. I feel her life is now my responsibility. I've exposed her prematurely. We get to the top. They put the noose around her neck. The guards around all have submachine guns. I don't have a chance. But there's gotta be a way. Tension is building. Should I kidnap the Mother Superior and hold a knife to her throat? Or should I surrender? Perhaps if I do, they'll kill me instead and let her go. In this dilemma I wake up with my heart pounding.

This dream well illustrates the diabolical inner system under the witch-like "Mother Superior" who cuts off access to the inner feminine in order to keep it "in." Here the structure of the dream duplicates that of many fairy tales, for example, the Grimm's tale Rapunzel,[2] with its inner sanctum and its child in captivity. In Mike's dream the negative image of the Mother Superior responds just like the witch in *Rapunzel* when she finds out that the fair Rapunzel has had secret contact with the prince. In a similar way, Mike's dream indicates that the inner sanctum has been penetrated. His young friend "Pam" is now anxious to break free of her false identity and the dreamer feels a new responsibility for her, having "exposed her prematurely."

In a final dream of this period, the dream ego, here identified with the exploiting defenses of a kind of sex-slave trade ring, gives up its narcissism and refuses to exploit the young feminine figure sexually:

I'm with two or three black men who seem to be trading in slave-girls. They're describing this young woman who's so hot and gives wonderful blow-jobs. I'm curious and titillated. In comes this pre-pubescent black girl—fully developed but wearing a diaper! I'm in terrible conflict. She's sexually delicious-looking, but I can feel her vulnerability and her pain. I decide not to indulge my pleasure but to respond to her pain. I wrap her in a large towel, hold her and rock her until she feels better.

As Mike and I worked with this dream, he realized that in the same way he had been addicted to rage in order not to feel his psychic pain, he had also been addicted to sexual pleasure and release. Giving up these defenses meant sacrificing the high of his machismo-defenses, but now he

gained access to a whole realm of creative "devotional" feelings vis-à-vis women that had always been very frightening to him before. "I think I would have been gay if I hadn't split off from my feelings of feminine vulnerability early on" Mike said. "But now it's different. With Karen, instead of fucking, it's love-making now—whole-body orgasms instead of localized genital ones."

Middle phase: new relationship to aggressive energies

In addition to his work on integrating the vulnerable "feminine" part of himself, Mike was also working on trying to claim his aggressive energies in a more related way. Previously, his aggression had been inflated and had "carried him away"—like demon possession. This was especially true in his daredevil days where he always pushed the edge of "immortality," whether in bar-fights, car-racing, cliff-diving, or boxing. Now his aggression was more controlled but he still sometimes got himself in trouble. In body building he always lifted too much weight and sometimes threw his back out. Driving his car, he tended to tailgate slower drivers and frequently got into dangerous arguments with them.

On one occasion he tailgated a pickup truck and when the driver refused to let him through, Mike gave him the "finger." The man pulled over to the shoulder. Mike squealed his car in behind the truck fuming with rage. The truck driver got out, also furious. At this moment, Mike got hold of what was happening. He realized he was "possessed" again. He closed his door, clenched his fists, and bowed his head. The other man descended on him in a rage and kicked his door in. Still Mike held his rage. Later he reported this incident with pride, which I echoed, as a victory over his own inner rage-demon. The $1,500 in damages to his car was a small price to pay for such a lesson in self-control and humility.

Shortly after this incident, Mike had a dream of his anger-demon:

> I'm running and being pursued by this evil force. I use many identities and names and barely get away. Now I'm separate from the guy running away ... like I've met my double. I'm sympathetic with his plight ... I wish he could have a fuller life. I feel a lot of compassion for him as we talk. Then the scene changes. Somehow, through this compassion we've become one again. I'm now the man on the run, but I now know I have to go back to where this running all began—to find its source.
>
> I enter a large courtyard with many buildings. I approach the central headquarters from which all of this is directed. I start to feel anxious—like I'm walking into the lion's den! All around me are computers and circuit-boards and huge files and then I see the central figure—a Nazi. He's demonic and intense. He's spent his whole life pursuing me and I've been running. He's in

shock! He can't believe I'm there. He's both thrilled to see me because he's spent his whole life chasing me ... yet he's also deflated! We start to talk about how our whole life has been about the chase. I say to him: "I know how much meaning this chase has given to your life" ... he says "yes," but now I've got you! He grabs me, shakes me, spitting in my face. He's saying this whole file—all these drawers are filled with my aliases and maps and clues to my whereabouts. He says he missed me once by 14 minutes!

He now takes me into a room. Beside it is a fire-escape so I'm already positioning myself for flight again, but I go willingly. I know that whatever happens in this room will be the culmination of our life together. I had to come back here to face this. The room is barren with broken chairs, the dead carcasses of bugs and bones of animals. He walks in after me and locks the door. He goes over to a spigot to wash his hands. I sense he's going to fuck me! My biggest fear and threat is being anally fucked—the ultimate humiliation—like in the movie Deliverance. But as he opens the faucet, the pipe just bursts. The water blows out with tremendous power, knocking him back and spraying both of us until we're soaked. The burst of water wakes me up!

In this dream, Mike willingly submits to the wrathful demon who has tortured him all his life—very much like Job voluntarily submitted to Yahweh's wrath in Jung's classic analysis of that biblical story (Jung, 1952a). It is his compassion for his own anxious self that seems to facilitate this. He wants to have a fuller life and knows this means overcoming the fear upon which his demon has been feeding. By running he has "kept his Nazi in business" as it were, and now by voluntarily sacrificing himself, he "calls the bluff" on his own rageful defense. While this does not transform the Nazi into a humble collaborator, it does unify them both in the burst of water which drenches everything. Water often stands symbolically for life and feeling.

The reader may perhaps have noticed the parallels between this dream's theme of a necessary return to face the Nazi demon who is "the source of his running" and the Ninth Circle in Dante's descent in the previous chapter, where actual contact must be made with the body of Dis by the Pilgrim and his guide. Only after this confrontation does the path out of Hell become clear. Mike's comment to the Nazi "I know how much meaning this chase has given to your life" is the dream's remarkable wisdom (put in a mocking and humorous way) that the Nazi (and Dis) is given energy by—and may actually be a creation of—Mike's anxiety and flight from his unbearable affects. Mike's fear and the face of the Nazi, in other words, are opposite sides of the same dynamic, flip sides of the same coin.

Anger in the transference

In addition to avoiding fights in the outer world, Mike was also working on his anger in the transference. About 18 months into our process I took an extended summer break. When we returned to our analytic process, he reported how furious he'd been over the vacation. His old boyhood asthma had returned and with it feelings of helpless dependency and rage. "You failed to take responsibility for what you started," Mike told me. "I was totally unprepared for the loss of you ... fortunately you gave me something to read over the break[3] and that gave me a symbolic container—but I have to tell you," he said, "when I swam laps up and down the shore of the Atlantic, I was cursing you. The water was steaming!"

Fortunately, this moment turned out to be a *felix culpa*—a rupture that we repaired together. As I listened and took in Mike's anger, I realized that his point was well made. Hearing the genuine sense of pain and injury under his anger, I had to wrestle within myself with my own need for such lengthy vacation breaks and the effect these had on the people I was committed to in my work. In fact, there *was* a responsibility I was shirking here—in part with his collaboration, i.e., the extent of Mike's underlying dependency in the transference was unconscious—to both of us, until this event. My oversight "flushed it out" as it were and also provided the rough edge for his related expression of justified anger. Things became more "real" between us and now the two sides of his inner world—love (feminine) and aggression (masculine)—began to co-exist, no longer as victim/persecutor, but in a more integrated story. For example:

> I enter my house and find alot of men, all serving up steaks on plates—all from my refrigerator! All these guys are sitting down eating my meat! A Hungry Horde! I am very agitated, and go walking around looking for the leader to throw him out. I find him and he's in bed—my bed!... with a woman. They're both obviously disturbed about something. As I witness this, all my aggression leaves and I ask him what's wrong. He says it's the woman. She's hurting about something. I tell him "look, women sometimes need to be touched where their pain is ... you need to be patient with her and if you are, it'll turn around and she'll be able to celebrate with you and a real deep joy will be possible."

This dream needs no interpretation. The leader of the "meat-eating masculine" (prior defense) is now caring for a wounded woman and the dream ego is mediating between them.

The pie-baker and the stained glass man

Sometimes this mediation did not go so smoothly and depended on intercession from the imago of his wife Karen and the children, as in the following amusing dream which Mike and I often referred to in later sessions:

> I drive into our driveway and down near the entrance is an old woman and a child camping out. Karen has given them permission to live there without consulting me! I'm pissed. We argue about this ... finally I give in and decide we can build them a room in the garage. I walk down the driveway and realize that there's an old house there which I haven't been in for a while. A guy is in there and he's making pies!—singing and baking and having a great time. Again I feel intruded upon! He's using the whole downstairs. I walk up to the house and get Karen again—"he's gotta go!" I shout. Karen is embarrassed at my anger and pleads his case. I start to feel bad about kicking him out. I take Karen and Willie down to the house with the pies. Willie really likes this place—and the pie-baker. I say to the guy that I don't feel acknowledged or appreciated ... he says I can always come down and have a pie—anytime! "But I can't smell the pies where I am up on the hill" I reply. Other kids now come in and are eating the pies. Willie too. Willie wants to live in this place now!
>
> I now learn that there's a garage associated with this house which I've leased to still *another* guy! He's making stained glass in there! Beautiful pieces of this glass are all around. He's apparently repairing the windows on a 200-year-old church right next door! The guy there is really nice to Willie. Again I struggle to overcome feeling unappreciated and then decide to let him live there too.

Mike confessed that this dream had occurred over the weekend after he had thrown his back out lifting rocks and was virtually "forced" to relax. "I turned my engine off," he said, "I had a blissful day reading and just lying in the sun.... I wonder ... do I have to hurt myself to be receptive?"

This dream became a touchstone in our work together—we could always refer to the "pie-maker" and to the "stained-glass man" as more integrated images of Mike's heretofore one-sided aggressive/masculine orientation. All the new dream-"squatters" on his land were creative, more feminine figures. They were loved by Karen and his boys. They were becoming part of him over the protest of his old defenses. The "stained-glass man" seemed to be moving him closer to a neglected spirituality (church) which now the dream says is being repaired. Stained glass is also about many colors—i.e., more differentiated feeling. The "white light" of his previous one-dimensional consciousness was being "refracted" through suffering into something beautiful and restorative.

The discovery of this "lost church" and its relationship to the major shakeup in his defenses was commemorated with the following short dream:

> I'm with a woman in a mountainous landscape. Huge boulders are coming down all around us. At any moment we could be annihilated. But as the mountain is shaking off the boulders, a huge steeple at the center is being uncovered. At first I think it's like the Chrysler building, but then I realize it's a church.

This dream reminded us of the Colorado rock-slide dream of our early sessions. Now there's a woman present and a church being slowly uncovered. The stones, representing his "Rocky" defenses, slowly are "coming down," exposing that spiritual "center" that Jung spoke of as the Self and that Edward Edinger further explicated as the ego–Self axis (Edinger, 1972: 3–7).

By this time, Mike and I were midway through our analytic adventure together. Considerable progress had been made in the "suffering of God," i.e., suffering the tension between his splitting rage and his unifying love. More and more mediating figures appeared—the pie-man, the stained-glass man—and his own attitude was now increasingly one of compassion and understanding.

In the transference also greater feelings of intimacy were shared. On one occasion, Mike's father had visited and Mike was struck by how little feeling he could risk with this man in comparison to what he felt with me in our therapy hours. All the same, he did not blame himself for the gap with his father as he had previously. "I have a Daddy inside me now," he said. "You modeled it for me with your humility." This session brought a dream which clarified my role in the analysis:

> You and I are sitting at a table and you're receiving a medical report on me—blood levels, etc. Karen walks in. I say "Don's got a great relationship with the dream-maker but his arms are too short to box with God."

By this humorous dream, Mike understood that I was appropriately modest in my analytic stance and that it would be quite enough if I continued to attend his "dream-maker's" messages and did not get too inflated in our work together.

Churches as sanctuaries for integration of love and hate

The theme of the church as a containing sanctuary for Mike's inner opposites continued. The earlier "Afghani dream" had occurred in a church, but there the integration had been aborted. In the following dream, the

connections are maintained. The dream occurred after a moment when he lost his temper with Jeremy, who woke him up one morning by hitting him in the face with socks:

> I kill somebody—a man. I can't justify what I've done ... can't talk my way out of it. I'm going to jail for a long time so I run—along back roads trying to avoid being apprehended. There are people with me, including a couple of kids. I'm in this town receiving shelter from kind people. They want to take me to church! I reluctantly agree. They take me back into the same town where I committed the murder! I'm very anxious. I try to communicate my situation to them ... but they think it's a lesser charge. In the church, the judge is there, also the family of the deceased is there. Jeremy is also there. I can't believe it! Jeremy is on my lap. I'm just stroking him. He falls asleep. I'm trying to tolerate the tension of being there—the anxiety. I struggle with whether to escape or stay with Jeremy and be apprehended. I look into Jeremy's eyes and I can see his innocence and goodness. I can't leave him.... I feel enormous sadness about my situation, but I'm prepared to give myself up.

Here again the theme of "innocence" emerges—something we will explore more fully in Chapters 7 and 8. It is likely that in this dream "Jeremy" should be interpreted, not only as Mike's son, but also as the carrier of his early trauma—his soul-child. In seeing Jeremy's "goodness" and being filled with love for his boy, Mike now chooses the exposure and vulnerability of loving over the protection of the old defense with its Nazi-dominated fear and endless running. His capacity for this choice, i.e., his newfound affect tolerance, is shown in the mediating energy of the "kind people" in the dream who see his crime as a "lesser charge" and insist on taking him into the same sanctuary which contains both his victims and his judge. Again, he is prepared to surrender in order to stay with his innocent "boy."

As we approached the end of year four of the analysis, a major integration was taking place in Mike. This showed itself in many small ways: his driving had slowed down, he was lifting less weight and being kinder to his body (his chiropractor said he was "holding" body alignment much longer); he began to read more, and listen to music. Most important, he was appreciating his family more consciously—holding the love he felt even in the presence of his fear of loss. This newfound alignment between the ego and the Self also brought with it a feeling of being held by a fabric of meaning and wholeness that was not of his making and that made him feel safer in the world.

One day on his way to one of our sessions he saw a flock of Canadian geese take off from a pond, climb into the sky amidst their echoing cries,

and assume a V-formation. As he watched, one of the geese took the lead, Mike found himself thinking "Is he leading or following an invisible beacon?" We talked about how much more comfortable he was "following" the "still small voice" of the Self now—that in fact this is probably what he'd been doing all along! It was the conceit of his ego to think he was leading and always in charge.

Revelation, the Buddha's tear, and the arrival of sympathy

One of the remarkable dreams of this fruitful phase—again, linked to his love for his family and his newfound feminine feeling capacities—was as follows:

> I am outside on a sunny morning in an unfamiliar town. I'm drawn across the street to an old mansion outside of which are dozens of large amphoras—all of different sizes. These have been recovered from shipwrecks of antiquity—about 4200 BC. They're shaped like women's bodies and still have the original remnants of wine in them.
>
> I am then standing in line with a group of people inside this house. Apparently they are queuing up for a brief audience with the Dalai Lama, the living Buddha! As each person gets to the Master he/she sits for about 5 seconds, then gets up and moves on—as if he's giving them Shakti-pot.
>
> Then it's my turn. I sort of stumble a bit. Everyone else seems so fluid. My knees buckle as I sit down. He hasn't looked at anyone yet, but then he looks at me with a radiant smile! He turns his head from side to side, taking me in with a "knowing look." Then a big tear rolls down his cheek. I see myself reflected in this tear. I don't know what to do. He suggests I take a piece of paper and write down a diagram which involves two lines separating three white spaces, past, present, and future. He draws it in the air. Finishing, he says "that should allow you to experience a greater sense of safety." I wake up deeply moved.

This beautiful dream became a touchstone for Mike in his understanding of what Jung meant by the Self. He had many strong associations. To the amphoras, shaped like women, he associated a TV special which had enthralled him about recovered treasure from ancient ships sunk in the Mediterranean Sea. To the Dalai Lama, the living Buddha, he associated his own spiritual journey to India and the abortive efforts he had made to find a guru he could trust. Now it was his therapy process and his own unconscious that he trusted. To the "knowing look" of the Buddha he associated the way he often stood looking over his boys as they slept during

the night and the overwhelming love he felt for them—which frequently brought tears to his eyes. The shining surface of these tears—now cried in compassion by the great God/man—gives him back to himself (reflects him) and leaves him feeling loved, secure, and deeply moved.

The Dalai Lama's diagram at the end of the dream puzzled us at the time, and remains a mystery. The two vertical lines defining past, present, and future seem to bracket the present at the center for emphasis and to associate this area with a sense of safety. With the benefit of hindsight, and having read Daniel Stern's (2004) *The Present Moment in Psychotherapy and Everyday Life,* I am inclined to think that perhaps this is a reference to the "eternal now" that we access at those genuine moments where *Kairos* intersects chronological time. Stern points out that the Greek *chronos* is an "objective, quantitative" view of time used in science and psychology and that in it "the present instant is always moving. As it moves, it eats up the future and leaves the past in its wake.... Effectively there is no present. (Stern, 2004: 5). *Kairos,* on the other hand, signifies the subjectivity of the present—an indeterminate moment that escapes or transcends the passage of linear time and has to do with the right or opportune moment (the supreme moment) for the "action that must be taken, now, to alter one's destiny" (Stern, 2004: 7). We might think of *Kairos* as the propitious moment when an opening occurs "between the worlds." The moment in Mike's dream when he saw himself reflected in the tear of the living Buddha must have been such a moment.

As our analytic adventure continued, images of the feminine became more and more frequent in Mike's dream material. One in particular caught both of our attention:

> I'm driving down a rural road that looks familiar. At a crossing with a stream there's a huge backhoe which has dug the stream out to make room for a river-course—water's brown from the digging. I notice that on both sides of the river are concrete footings for a bridge to go over the river and define a new roadway. A new gas station has been built on my right and it's all white except for one wall which has a lot of color on it. As I sit and watch, a woman walks up to the colored wall. She paints the word SYMPATHY. She's beautiful, blond, in her 20s, vaguely familiar. She walks past and I say "excuse me, what do you mean by sympathy?" She laughs and we start talking. Another woman (her sister?) comes up and we laugh and talk warmly together. I love what's happening. Then Sympathy says "we just spent $500 for new clothes because we knew we were going to meet you here today... and by the way your family is just fine—they laugh and continue on. I wake up realizing that the inside joke is that sometime in the past I must have impregnated this woman and she is caretaking an unknown child of mine. I am deeply affected by this.

Mike was intrigued by this dream, and so was I. He looked up the word "sympathy" and found its roots in "pathos" and "compassion." Also, he reported, the dictionary suggests "affinity between persons, harmony, accord ... ability to enter into others' suffering and mental state ... or in physics, vibrations that one body sets up in another, like a lode-stone and iron." As we talked together about the dream, we noted that its setting was where a "new road" was being constructed and a bridge was being built—clearly a reference to new connections inside himself. Also, it struck us that Sympathy painted her name on the colorful wall of the gas station (reminding us of his earlier dream of the colored bikini he found in his otherwise white washing), supporting her role as a figure associated with his growing capacity for feeling.

We also noted the new "gas station" at the dream's intersection (a new source of energy?) and the fact that Sympathy was the mother of Mike's forgotten child. This opened up a whole exploration of early "memories" Mike had of his mother. He knew somewhere that there was an old "bliss" place with his mother which had been long since forgotten and abandoned. Why else would he have been so inconsolable when she left him alone? He began to feel the loss of his mother and an uprush of "devotional" feelings for his wife, Karen. His connection to Karen was now "wetter and deeper" he said.

The idea of Sympathy as the mother of Mike's "forgotten child" is worth pausing over. If we imagine that Sympathy and Mike's newfound "devotional" feelings vis-à-vis his mother might memorialize *Mike's early secure attachment experiences with his mother in infancy*, then the implication is that such "moments" fostered a "child" who is now re-appearing (at least as a potential, i.e., a pregnancy) in the dream material. If, as Jung advises, we think of this forgotten child, not only as Mike's childhood self, but also as that mysterious and imperishable personal spirit or soul, then we could say that the dream process is returning Mike's lost soul back to his body—back to his psycho-somatic unity. Like in the myths explored in Chapter 2, where the half-divine/half-human child is abandoned or exiled for fear of the patriarchy, it is nonetheless kept safe (escaping to Egypt, surrounded by protective daimonic dancers, or recovered in a fisherman's net). In Mike's dream the child has been kept safe, growing in the womb of "Sympathy."

This theme of a lost boy he had fathered with a woman in the past came up several times. One of the most memorable dreams was the following—what we came to call his "Prodigal Son" dream after the biblical story (Luke 15:11–32) in which Jesus tells a parable of two sons, one of whom is dutiful and "good," the other of whom wastes his inheritance on riotous living, and leads a lost and broken life in exile. Nonetheless, the father of the tale (representing the longing in the psyche for integration and wholeness) wants him back and welcomes him home. Mike dreamed:

> I'm a part of a police force and we're chasing this young man who's about the age of my son Willie ... 8 or 9. He looks like an Afghani child, neglected starving and lost. He carries an old newspaper in his hand. This boy has eluded us for years, yet now that we've captured him, I'm confused. He looks at me imploringly and says "is it time?" ... tentatively handing me the newspaper. The front-page article is about this lost boy, and how much his father wants him back ... he's been lost or abandoned or abducted! The newspaper tells his story. In that moment I look closely into his eyes and recognize him as my son! (As if he'd been the child of an old girlfriend I'd gotten pregnant). I'm overcome with feeling. All I can say is "I love you." I reach out for him and wake up in an embrace, deeply moved.

This dream commemorates a homecoming. Mike was very moved as he told it, realizing that this return of the lost boy represented the return of a lost part of himself—the open, needy, vulnerable, and shamed eight-year-old inside himself that had been exiled to some war-torn foreign land full of oppression and violence, like Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban. The "news" brought by the dream's newspaper is that this boy's father (Mike's newly integrating ego) wants him back from this "other" country (in the unconscious). The implication is that he's been waiting for a long time to return but only recently has a "story" been written about his plight, i.e., only recently has Mike become conscious of him. Again, an old girlfriend (early connection to the feminine) is the "source" of this child. Apparently life wasn't the same without him, but Mike didn't know how much he had lost until the full impact of these dreams.

Regression and reconstitution of the old defense

Toward the end of our fifth year together there was a whole new "re-arrangement" of energy in Mike. He came in one day saying "I've been in a blender ever since I left last session. I've gotten wired up ... a vibratory increase on a cellular level—if I think about it I get excited. A sense of being 'in' the numinous. Something re-aligned—ego and Self perhaps ... like Kundalini energies. I feel like I could walk on water." In short, Mike was inflated.

Out of this energy he planned an extravagant special trip for himself and his wife and went to considerable pains to arrange this surprise for Karen. When her birthday arrived and Mike presented her with the trip, however, Karen was overwhelmed by the extravagance and failed to respond in the same loving spirit in which he had planned it. He was devastated and withdrew in a rage. Back came the old counter-dependent defenses with their pride, rage, and terror over annihilation of a vulnerable self. He dreamed:

> I infiltrate this group that has cannibalized people. They're using the blood to build this huge super-Frankenstein-like beast. They're feeding it into this monster with supernatural abilities. It feeds off the life of others but can't sustain itself.

Days went by. Mike was back in his old counter-dependent "Rocky" position. Just like his dream announced, however, this time the defense could not "sustain itself." Finally he surrendered his pride to Karen—broke down and tearfully acknowledged how much the planned trip had meant to him—how deeply hurt he felt, and how angry at her neutral response. Instead of alienating Karen, this evoked deep compassion from her and the trip was re-scheduled, this time with her input.

The return of Sympathy

Mike's dreams responded immediately:

> The blonde woman is with me again. I have a big round bed. She is very tired and needs to rest, and for the first time I haven't sexualized my relationship with her, i.e., I can let her rest. Her body keeps moving around the bed like the hands of a clock. I keep looking in on her (like I do my boys). We now have a friendship.

Mike felt this was the return of Sympathy after a prolonged absence. It interested us both that her body kept time on his circular bed like the hands of a clock—as if somehow Mike's life narrative was now unfolding according to feminine time. Then Mike dreamed: "Sympathy is my real estate agent. She's looking for a better place for me to live with the family."

During this time, as if Sympathy were present, Mike became aware of a deepening in his feelings for Karen. He was now having conversations with her that included his previously shameful vulnerability. He was no longer withholding a part of himself. He realized he'd always kept an option open for another woman in his mind—someone who would really "understand" him. This had meant only a partial commitment to his wife and his life with her. Then he dreamed:

> I'm going to get married to Karen. We've been trying for a really long time. I struggle with the final commitment—do I really need to be married.... I walk near a big pond with dolphins in it ... I then decide I do want to marry Karen. Just then she shows up. I embrace her with this deep kiss which arouses me. Later we make wonderful love.

As usual with archetypal defenses, each step forward in Mike's integration got the old self-care system agitated. Shortly after the positive developments above, the following dream occurred:

> Some terrorists show up and are holding a woman and a child hostage. I step up and ask them not to do that. I say "Please don't do this! ... take me instead." I get shot twice in the chest and drop to the floor. I get up one more time and they shoot me again. All three bullets have hit my left chest but none has hit me in the heart. Finally the ambulance arrives and a doctor starts to work on me.

Although in this dream the old defense threatens again to encapsulate his inner world, the dream ego again sacrifices itself and is not "killed." The supreme wisdom in this ego-stance is the recognition that the "terrorists" get all their energy from the ego's fight—in fact they themselves somehow *are* this fight. The final "truth" of this insight was confirmed in one of the last dreams of Mike's analytic adventure, a "big" dream with many archetypal connections.

Voluntary sacrifice and the beheading game

> I'm up on this altar with two other men. In front of us is an enormous man with a huge sword or scepter. We are all to be sacrificed. I'm third in line. I look at the first man and feel a lot of compassion for him. His head is turned down and he's unprepared to die. The "terminator" walks up behind him ready to take off his head. He sees me looking at the man and walks over to me. He lifts my head, cupping my chin tenderly, then lifts and stretches my neck out. He walks behind me. (In that moment when he touches me my reservations fade. As I stretch out my neck I step into another river of consciousness.... I'm welcoming death now.... I've connected with the other side). He takes his sword and comes down, but only grazes my neck. He comes back around in front of me. A part of me is still on the other side, but I'm back in my body now, feeling giddy. He stands me up and turns me around to a temple I didn't even know I was in. A whole group of people are there, very respectful and happy for me, as if I've passed an initiation of some kind. He leads me over to this sacred space—a sanctuary resembling a garden. His sword is sheathed now. He says "someone will take very good care of you."

By now, Mike was able to interpret his own dreams. In response to this one, he said:

> One has to be able to accept mortality and death to connect with Spirit. I'm much more able now to incur the vulnerability that allows me to feel the full sorrow of life—a sorrowful longing for wholeness ... that all we can do is be with others in their pain and joy—holding that ... holding the love for Karen and my boys. As I hold the sorrow, life returns and the joy with it. If I can't hold that

tension, I slip out of the river and I'm stranded back on the banks. The experience now is grounded. Earlier this year with all that Kundalini energy flowing through, I wasn't grounded. That was like an ungrounded circuit or like being out on the spokes of a wheel, whipped around. This is like being near the hub. My individuality is being transformed. My sense of separateness is dissolving—we're all one—everything is interconnected.

Although I didn't mention it to Mike on this occasion, I was struck by the uncanny similarity between his "beheading" dream and the Middle English romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* which is also a story about the necessary sacrifice of pride (see Campbell, 1988: 152–3). In that tale, a huge green knight appears at King Arthur's court and challenges everyone there to a "beheading game." Sir Gawain rises to the challenge and decapitates the knight—who then calmly picks up his severed head and announces that Gawain must receive his blow a year and a day later at the Green Chapel. Arriving at the chapel at the appointed time, Gawain is met by its Lord (Bercilak) and an old crone (Morgan le Fay) who set before him various seductive temptations (designed to test his integrity). Gawain meets all these tests save one, i.e., he accepts the green garter of Bercilak's wife, which he thinks will make him invulnerable. In exchange for this flawed integrity, the Green Knight grazes his neck with the axe, then identifies himself as Bercilak in disguise. Gawain shamefully acknowledges his cowardice and agrees to wear the green garter as a symbol of his human weakness and as a warning against his pride.

In both Mike's dream and the Arthurian tale the message is the same. If the ego has identified with the inflated energies of the Self and become "heroic," it must dis-identify through human suffering and voluntarily surrender its claim. This act not only changes the ego, it seems to change the Self (in its dark manifestation) as well, i.e., now the previously terrifyingly negative energy (the beheader) shows its "other side" and not only forgives the errant ego but (in Mike's dream) turns it around and shows it the sacred enclosure it was standing in all along.

As if to confirm these insights, and on the threshold of ending our analytic adventure together, Mike had a dream which seemed to link his own suffering with the suffering of God.

Opening into pain is opening into God

I'm in some kind of spiritual sanctuary. People are praying out loud, each in turn. When it comes to my turn I don't have a prayer. I think to myself "but I can talk of my experience of God." I then prayerfully say that "in opening to the pain of life and loving, I touch into God as God ... that with that awareness I release myself into the great suffering of all humanity and release myself into God's mind."

As Mike and I neared the end of our work, both of us grieving the immanent loss of our extraordinary time together, he talked more and more about the beautiful moments in his life—with his boys, with his wife, with his students at school, in nature—and how sad it made him to realize how fleeting this all is. He realized that trauma makes living, loving, and grieving so difficult because to hold the vulnerability and the pain of loss together *when loss has been traumatic* means suffering incredible resistance, i.e., getting through *archetypal defenses.* And yet no longer did his suffering these defenses seem like a meaningless waste. He had seen the "God" in these defenses—their mysterious meaning and intention and he realized that impossible as they had become in his life, ultimately they had saved him from psychological breakdown.

The problem came when the tough God who had helped him survive an unbearable childhood and filled him full of heroic, inflated energies was asked to "release" him into his "other" vulnerable feelings. This was where "suffering God" was an alive experience for Mike, and the only way through the hot flames of his inflated identifications to a more grounded connection to his own mortality. Mike never knew whether it was he himself who made this sacrifice or whether it was the God with whom he was identified who sacrificed Himself. He only knew that by affirming his mortal limits in time and space, with all their attendant terror, he had to do battle with and ultimately surrender to the part of his defense that would keep him forever hovering above the human condition. Whether or not it was true, *this seemed like a part of God that did not want him to be a man.* Mike knew from painful personal experience what Jung meant when he said:

> Yahweh's decision to become man is a symbol of the development that had to supervene when man becomes conscious of the sort of God-image he is confronted with. God acts out of the unconscious of man and forces him to harmonize and unite the opposing influences to which his mind is exposed from the unconscious. The unconscious wants both: to divide and to unite. *In his striving for unity, therefore, man may always count on the help of a metaphysical advocate,* as Job clearly recognized. The unconscious wants to flow into consciousness in order to reach the light, but at the same time it continually thwarts itself, because it would rather remain unconscious. That is to say, God wants to become man, but not quite.
>
> (Jung, 1952a: para. 740, p. 456)

Although Jung does not say so, and did not have a model that grasped it, this "but not quite" part—i.e., the psyche's seeming preference for darkness—represents the *defenses* that are an inevitable part of an unmediated, traumatic history. Mike and I wrestled with these defenses and in the early

going these confrontations were stormy and their outcome uncertain. But somehow our relatedness and rapport managed to survive the "efforts" of impersonal defenses to derail his individuation. Mike's initial resistance to incarnation was great—or rather the resistance of his guardian defenses was strong. Holding him in their protective hands, the needle of psychic anesthesia or inflation always poised and ready, Mike's archetypal guardians had to be reassured that if they "released" him into relationship, there would be a compassionate place for him to fall. Before he could stick his neck out for his inner axe-man he had to stick his neck out with me, and discover that what his henchman feared would happen, *wouldn't*. He did this. And in so doing he built for himself an "earthly tabernacle" where the true God of love could be born.

And who or what is this "God?" Is He/She merely the benevolent, "good" side of that evil "force" which kept mercilessly bombing and electrocuting Mike's inner child early in the analysis? This would be Jung's position and the one I also adopted in the writing of *The Inner World of Trauma*. Now I am not so sure (and perhaps Jung wasn't either). Behind the clash of opposites there seems to be something else "waiting" for us to make a choice—or not. A choice of what Symington calls the *lifegiver*. This transcendent *Other*—the "metaphysical advocate" referenced by Jung—only comes to presence when we choose it and this only seems possible in relationship. Making this choice somehow liberates us from the clash of opposites—for a mysterious "third" that comes to presence both inwardly (in symbolic space) and outwardly (in transitional space).

This mysterious *Other* is, according to Jung:

> a living third thing—not a logical stillbirth in accordance with the principle *tertium non datur* (a third is not given) but a movement out of the suspension between opposites, a living birth that leads to a new level of being.
>
> (Jung, 1916: para. 189, p. 90)

We have seen the "living third thing" in various forms in the previous chapters' clinical material. Sometimes it is the inner child—often an extraordinary or "divine" child, suggesting the human soul. Sometimes it seems to be the special guardian of this child. Sometimes it is a special animal—an imaginary companion. For Mike, the missing "third" was the forgotten child brought back by Sympathy in his dreams, and the indispensable factor that seems to bring this missing "third" to presence "between the worlds" is the mystery of human relationship.

Summary

It has now been over 25 years since Mike and I embarked upon our analytic adventure together. As I look over this "case" again, I realize that it

may strike the analytically informed reader as a "fairy tale" analysis. In part, this is because I've selected dreams and incidents to fit the pattern I'm trying to illustrate, and left others out. Any full report (if such a thing is possible) of Mike's and my process would have presented a much messier analysis. Nonetheless, the pattern reported is the pattern that emerged. And in my experience it holds true across many analyses.

Mike's material out-pictured a clear evolving process in which omnipotent defenses resulting from traumatic beginnings, and carrying both malevolent and benevolent energies, slowly lost their possessive power over the ego and became humanized through the analytic and extra-analytic accumulation of experience. The result was a slow, incremental centering of the personality—an "axis" of inner sustainment. This showed itself in the dreams of churches as sanctuaries for the dream's drama, in the image of a steeple that slowly emerged from a rock-slide as his defenses came down, and in those dreams showing a relativization of the ego in relation to the Self, such as the Buddha dream and the "beheading" dream. In Mike's subjective life, this emerging "axis" showed itself in his increasing self-esteem regulation, his increasing affect tolerance in relationships, and his increasing aliveness—his embodied soul-full-ness.

In the course of one's analytic life, there are always one or two patients who stand out as helping to shape one's own vocational destiny and self-understanding. Mike has certainly been that singular patient for me. In the intervening 20 years since the completion of his analysis we have stayed in touch and it would not surprise me if he were to tell his own story sometime soon, in his own words. Through the ecstasy and agony of his own intensely lived life (including his analysis), he has clearly found his way to what James Hillman (1996) called an "adequate biography." He didn't even know he was looking for this when he started. Perhaps, if the truth be told, his "calling" was looking for him. In any case, by *re-discovering* it for himself, he helped me find mine also.

Plate 1 Blake's good and evil angels struggling for the possession of a child.

Plate 2 Henriette Wyeth, *Death and the Child.*

Plate 4 The Harrowing of Hell by Christ as he enters Limbo to free its prisoners.

Plate 5 Christ's battle with Hades as he frees Limbo's prisoners.

5

WHOLENESS AND ANTI-WHOLENESS DEFENSES

> Every one of us carries a deforming mirror where he sees himself too small or too large, too fat or too thin.... One discovers that destiny can be directed, that one does not need to remain in bondage to that first imprint made on childhood sensibilities, one need not be branded by the first pattern. Once the deforming mirror is smashed, there is the possibility of wholeness, there is the possibility of joy.
>
> Anaïs Nin (2005; quoted in Speerstra, 2005: 508–9)

Introduction

The epigraph above suggests that our sense of wholeness is eclipsed or occluded by the "deforming mirrors" of childhood "imprints"—the distorted ways in which we are often seen by parents or significant others. It also implies that the ways we are seen by others become the ways in which we see ourselves—inner deforming mirrors. Trauma, the subject of this book, leaves us with many such "deforming mirrors," and with a sense of ourselves that is less than, and different from, the real person we are—from the standpoint of the soul. This is because after trauma, dissociative defenses are set up in the inner world and these defenses distort what we are able to see of ourselves and others. They become *anti-wholeness factors* in the psyche. They dis-integrate and fragment us. To glimpse the possibility of our wholeness the deforming mirrors created by these defenses must be transformed so that we can "see through" the dissociative barriers to our authentic selfhood—to the soul-life that wants to unfold its pattern of wholeness in our developing lives.

As we have seen in previous cases, replacing the deforming mirrors is not easy. We become habituated—sometimes even addicted—to the vision of ourselves they provide. The distorting mirrors of these defenses are created in the acute suffering of trauma but, once established, they perpetuate suffering—a chronic, but tolerable form of it. This suffering is a kind of chronic repetition known in psychoanalysis as the "repetition compulsion." It goes on and on and never resolves itself. Each repeat of such

suffering "proves" (to the self-care system) the "truth" of that distorted image of the self seen in the deforming mirror.

Sometimes it takes another person to hold up a more accurate mirror in which the possibility of our wholeness can be glimpsed. This is the most common way in which our distorted interpretations of ourselves are challenged by alternative interpretations offered by someone who sees us like we haven't been seen before. Sometimes psychotherapists can offer such alternative interpretations, throwing the all-too-familiar voice of the self-care system into question. If such interpretation is effective, the patient may suddenly see himself/herself through another lens, undistorted by the mirrors of childhood. Life suddenly seems possible, here and now.

Sometimes an *inner* experience can release us from our deforming mirrors. For example, good literature, film, music, an "epiphany" of beauty in the natural world, or an experience of a *numinous* vision or dream may evoke our truer deeper selves, liberating us momentarily from the deforming images we have acquired and allowing us to see through into a deeper truth about ourselves and our potential life ... our potential wholeness. Some of our best therapy comes from these private inner resources, not just from the interpersonal field.

Dreams are especially important in the psychotherapy process because often they offer a non-distorting mirror that reflects our larger potential selfhood. What my patient Mike (Chapter 4) called his "dream-maker" often seemed to provide a larger perspective than his ego's narrow view. This larger perspective often included a spiritual dimension which itself brought healing. Indeed, attention to dreams is perhaps the single factor that most distinguishes a depth-psychological approach from a purely inter-personal or relational one. In Chapter 1 we saw several examples of how a spiritual presence may hold up another "mirror" to the beleaguered self, inviting the soul back into embodiment.

In this chapter we will look at a clinical case and several dreams that responded to events within the transference/countertransference field. In the process we will witness the operation of anti-wholeness defenses which seem to fight for their own "deforming mirror" of the patient's life, against the growing consciousness of a larger vision which threatens to integrate the painful affects surrounding her trauma.

In addition to the clinical stories and vignettes, in this chapter we will explore the topic of wholeness against the backdrop of recent research in the field of contemporary neuroscience, especially the work of Iain McGilchrist (2009) and Allen Schore (1994, 2003a, 2003b), whose combined research underscores the importance of working back and forth between the hemispheres of the brain in the interest of wholeness. There is accumulating evidence that the separate hemispheres of the human brain mediate very different worlds of experience, and that optimal functioning involves both hemispheres working together in an integrated fashion. This research gives a scientific foundation in

hemispheric studies of the brain, for the "two worlds" which constitute our psycho-spiritual perspective.

The findings of this research also illuminate how defensive processes resulting from early trauma may dis-integrate the brain's normal holistic functioning leading to actual damage to the right hemisphere. This, in turn, may lead to lasting deficits in emotional integration and processing and (possibly) to a premature over-reliance on the left hemisphere. The result is a progressive split between the body and the mind. These findings carry important implications for the psychotherapeutic treatment of trauma.

To be seen in our wholeness

My inspiration for this chapter comes from a story related to me by a female patient—now a colleague—who I will call "Sandra." This woman, herself a psychotherapist, had begun dating a man and was just getting to know him more. Her new friend was an artist and naturalist and had suffered a great deal of trauma in his life, some of it self-generated. He came from a background of poverty and severe parental neglect. He had acted-out as an adolescent, abused drugs and alcohol, had gone on to multiple marriages followed by multiple divorces, and had left a trail of failed business ventures in his wake. And yet this man seemed vitally alive to Sandra in a way that other more "suitable" men simply were not.

After a few weeks of dating they were having dinner and the man leaned over the table and said to my colleague, "Look, my life is a mess right now. I don't have a lot to offer you ... I'm barely making a living. You're a successful professional woman. Why are you still interested in me?"

Sandra was taken aback. She found herself touched by this honesty and by the man's genuine struggle in his life. She took his hand, looked at him across the table and said "*I know ... but I can see your wholeness.*" A long silence followed in which she could see that her artist-friend was struggling with how to respond to her comment. His eyes filled with tears, and he had to look down in embarrassment to avoid flooding with emotion.

"No-one ever said that to me," he replied. Later he said he wasn't even sure what she meant by it. But something in him recognized the meaning of her statement, and he felt genuine gratitude upon hearing it. It touched his heart and gave him hope. "I can see your wholeness."

I found this story very compelling. It stayed with me, and I thought to myself how often we, as psychotherapists, are called upon to hold an image of our patients' wholeness when sometimes they feel utterly fragmented and in pieces, or so inwardly shamed that they have lost sight of their own potential as persons. Perhaps this larger vision is analogous to what Bion (1962) meant by the mother's "reverie" and her capacity to contain and transform what is otherwise unbearably painful in her infant—a process

that appears essential to the development of the baby's authentic selfhood and secure attachment.

My patient Sandra knew what it meant to offer an image of wholeness to her friend. In her personal history there were many "deforming mirrors" and very few people who saw her own wholeness as she grew up. Her anxious mother had held an especially distorting mirror, and so had the Catholic Church, which taught that she could be condemned to Hell for her very thoughts. Finding her own wholeness in this atmosphere had been difficult and this struggle ultimately led her into her own psychotherapy and into psychoanalytic training where she became a gifted clinician who helped others to see through their own "deforming mirrors." Along the way she also discovered that her search for wholeness inevitably took her into certain spiritual aspects of the psychological field. She discovered that the search for her own authentic core feelings and values was also the search for her own deeper soul-life.

Wholeness and our spiritual inheritance

One incident from Sandra's childhood beautifully illustrates the close relationship between wholeness and one's "spiritual inheritance"—one's God-given true-self expressiveness.

Consider the following situation. Sandra, aged four, is brimming with excitement and hope as the family prepares to move into their first real home, where she has been promised her own room and a real backyard with sandbox and swing set. The family is gathered outside on a beautiful spring day, greeting the neighbors and getting acquainted as the moving van unloads its cargo. In a creative act of inspiration, little Sandra picks a bouquet of flowers and enthusiastically hands them to her mother in celebration of this moment.

I would invite the reader to pause here and contemplate what is at stake in this moment ... a little girl reaching out for her mother with a handful of flowers in total loving exuberance—a moment of complete, unguarded *enthusiasm.* The root of that word is "en-theos"—the God or Spirit filling the person. We might say that something of this child's unique, God-given personal spirit or soul was reaching across a threshold here in search of reception by reality, an inner act of love awaiting an outer response. This response did not occur. Sandra's gesture was not met. Her spirit in this moment could not therefore "incarnate"—could not become real.

Her mother looked down at the flowers—then quickly at the neighbor's yard, and then anxiously scolded her daughter: "No, No, Sandra! What's the matter with you! How could you! You picked those flowers from Mrs. Smith's garden. Now you go and apologize to her." Dragging the little girl by the arm, she forced this apology out of her and simultaneously broke her heart, destroying the hope implicit in this creative act, foreclosing the transitional space in which Sandra's whole self was seeking actualization.

Experiences of this kind are not uncommon in childhood and need not be traumatic. Sandra's mother was not a "cruel person." Occasional derailments like this in an otherwise affirming family atmosphere will not matter all that much—they will not destroy the child's spirit, because such injuries can be repaired through empathy and understanding. But Sandra's mother was chronically anxious about the opinion of others, and there were frequent emotional mismatches between herself and Sandra—many deforming mirrors. In this instance, Sandra's mother was obviously more concerned with making the proper impression on the neighbors than she was with her daughter's sensitive feelings in the moment. Fifty years later, Sandra still remembered her four-year-old experience. She still feels the shame of it. And the "voice" of this shame remained a relentless chastising voice—a "distorting mirror" from within—that said "No, No Sandra! What's the matter with you!" This voice made sure that underneath all her outward success and personal accomplishment, there remained a deep sense of her own failure in the eyes of this (now) perfectionistic and deforming mirror.

Shame seems to be our feeling-response when *who we are* is found unacceptable, not merely *what we've done.* If someone criticizes our actions in a particular situation, this may cause us guilt, but it doesn't cut to the core like the humiliation provided by Sandra's mother at this moment. The moment was *traumatic* because the source of Sandra's spontaneous, loving gesture was something innocent and good in herself that we associate with the soul's potential life. In this case there was no resonant response in her mother for her daughter's soulful expression. Instead there was a distorting mirror. When this happens repeatedly, the soul cannot indwell—cannot actualize itself in the space between self and other to become an *inner* source of sustainment. Instead, the spark of life in a person must go into hiding to survive, and part of this hiding is accomplished through dissociation.

As we have seen in earlier cases in this book, dissociation does not annihilate the soul, but rather splits it off for safe keeping. Unfortunately, this splitting makes the essential core of the self unavailable to the functioning ego by keeping it oppressed and unconscious. In Jungian language the ego–Self axis is injured. The source of inner sustainment is compromised. Meanwhile, life goes on, but it is not fully animated from within by the divine spark of true selfhood. In identification with the shaming mirrors, a false or functioning self slowly takes over the person's relations with the outer world—a part of the whole self that says "No!" to spontaneous gestures coming from within.

Later, in psychotherapy or in a warm and compassionate relationship, the soul-spark can be re-found. Sandra recovered her enthusiasm for life and through her own experience of wholeness was able to offer the possibility of wholeness to others. She discovered, as she slowly saw through the deforming mirrors to a true reflection of herself, that "there is the possibility of wholeness. There is the possibility of joy."

Wholeness, distorting mirrors, and the personal narrative

When a patient comes into psychotherapy, he/she brings with him/her a personal history which is usually very fragmented and no longer "makes sense." At the center of this history is the divine spark in the person—the God-given, essential self—seeking incarnation in this world. This spark of authentic aliveness has often not been met "well enough" by the manifold positive and negative experiences-in-relationship that make any life one of both joy and suffering. Hence there are gaps or "holes" in the personal history. These holes are filled with "distorting mirrors"—defenses which come into play because some of the suffering that is experienced in the unmet places is too much to bear and cannot be experienced consciously (trauma). In these unmet places, body/mind integration is wounded and the core of the self cannot incarnate. Narrative competence is compromised because major parts of the narrative of a life remain (or become) unconscious. They have not disappeared. They are just unavailable to be processed consciously until a witness is available and affect can be experienced again in-the-body.

Further, the holes in the landscape are filled in with mental *interpretations*. These interpretations—some of them from the collective layer of the psyche and therefore stereotypical and caricatured—fill in the gaps in order for experience to become meaningful. They are the best meaning a child can make out of his/her own suffering but they usually represent a distorted story, not a true one—or we could say an impersonal, archetypal story, not a personally accurate one. Sandra had such a story as almost all children do who have their spontaneous gestures violated by the world. She thought there was something "wrong with her"—a defect or a set of inadequacies that rendered her life an inevitable "failure," and that accounted for her unhappiness. She didn't know what this defect could be, but she was convinced it was "her fault."

In our chapter on "Dis" we saw what a personal Hell such a story can plunge us into. Dis promulgates interpretations that keep his prisoners in their places. As the great nihilist, "he" is ruthlessly and implacably negative—the great adversary, the great accuser. He holds up a deforming mirror and the more we look into it the more convinced we become of the defect that he sees. Dis' interpretation of our life is an archetypal caricature of our true personal life, a negative, distorted, and primitive interpretation. But often we believe it.

When therapy begins, new alternative interpretations of the patient's suffering are provided by the therapist. The defensive system is confused, and resists these new formulations, but the patient's mature ego is intrigued by them. In addition, the child in the patient, who has been under such inner oppression by the defensive system, begins to attach to the therapist and his or her broader vision of the patient's potential wholeness. This new attachment restores a deeper feeling connection between

unconscious centers in the body-based emotional self (right hemisphere) and the more conscious "higher" aspects of the (left) brain involved in ego-functioning and meaning-making. The new, more inclusive interpretations begin to make sense on a feeling level.

As the process deepens, dreams may begin that provide images of the lost or orphaned parts of the self that have disappeared into the holes created by defenses. One patient dreamed that he was removing insulation from his house and that underneath it he found a puppy—long neglected and starving. Another dreamed that out in his dry and parched backyard, from under a layer of rock, springs of water were suddenly bubbling up, springs that he never knew were there. As these lost aspects of self-experience are attended and "re-membered," new interpretations of the personal history become integrated. As the distorting mirrors are transformed by mourning and working-through, a more whole, explicit personal narrative evolves to replace the stereotyped, caricatured, distorted, and implicit one.

Jung's recovery of wholeness through a dream

Wholeness can be an abstract idea—all-inclusive and somewhat vague—but in Jung, it means something unique, something related to psycho-spiritual integration. Perhaps no other single notion is more central to Jung's understanding of the human struggle than the idea of wholeness—our lifelong pursuit of it, and possibly *its lifelong pursuit of us.* For Jung, as we know, wholeness is a universal human urge or desire to fulfill all of oneself—all of one's potentials, all the aspects of ourselves as they have come into being or failed to come into being in our particular environmental circumstances. The unfolding of this potential wholeness *from within* is what Jung meant by individuation—"the strongest, the most ineluctable urge in every being, namely the urge to realize itself" (Jung, 1949: para. 289).

Throughout his writing, one of Jung's most consistent emphases was on the *dissociability of the psyche.* It is the very nature of the psyche, when faced with anxiety, to divide itself up into parts, and these parts (known as complexes) tend to be represented in dreams as part-personalities. In previous writing (Kalsched, 1995, 1996, 1998) I have described a typical constellation of these part-personalities as a *self-care system* and have tried to demonstrate its life-saving/life-destroying defensive function in the personalities of patients suffering from early childhood trauma. A dramatic example of this system's dissociative agency and "purpose" was seen in the previous chapter in the case of Mike.

If my interpretation of this "system's" operation is correct, there is lodged in the psyche of trauma survivors a kind of perpetual "dissociation machine," endlessly pushing the dis-integrated parts of the psyche apart and thereby constituting anti-wholeness, anti-integration factors in the

unconscious mind. These defenses operate autonomously and are triggered by fear—the fear of getting close to the painful affects that threatened the soul with annihilation—the fear, in effect, of a "breakdown that has already happened" (see Winnicott, 1974).

However, this is not the only "force" in the psyche. There is another tendency—equally strong or stronger—toward integration and wholeness. And if Jung is correct, there is a "longing" for this wholeness—an instinct for it. Jung would have been in complete agreement with Samuel Coleridge, who once lamented that many people contemplate "nothing but parts"—the universe for them amounts to nothing but a "mass of little things," whereas Coleridge himself "ached to behold and know something great—something one and indivisible ... something Great and Whole" (see McGilchrist, 2009).

How do we understand this longing for the "Great" and the "Whole"? Here, I think we come to a question that can't be fully answered and remains a mystery that is at the very center of our work as depth psychotherapists. What Jung means by wholeness is something "more" than getting all the parts of ourselves differentiated so they can come together and be integrated in a new pattern. That is a worthy goal to be sure (and in fact occupies us for many years of analysis—especially if we have a trauma history). But this struggle to differentiate and integrate parts of the self and to become conscious of split-off fragments of selfhood was not the mystery that saved Jung. In his experience of wholeness he found something more than the sum of its parts.

And the full realization of this "more" came to him from an unlikely source—from the apparent chaos of the unconscious itself. In this chaos he found an implicate order and an apparent center that somehow "saw" him more accurately than the deforming mirrors he was getting from his peers in the psychoanalytic movement. This "image" deeply reassured him, and made him feel whole again. These discoveries are reported in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung, 1963) in the chapter called "Confrontation with the Unconscious" and in the *Red Book* (Jung, 2009).

The *Red Book* describes vividly how, after his break from Freud, from 1912 until well into the 1920s, Jung suffered the rejection and shaming of his peers within the psychoanalytic movement. There were many "deforming mirrors" and, nightly, as he attended to his inner world and his fantasies, he was inundated by mocking voices. He realized he had become the subject of shameful and humiliating ridicule by his mentor and the men and women who had previously esteemed him within the psychoanalytic movement. Only a few faithful followers stayed with him. Now both the outer world and his inner world were full of violence and self-attack. He fantasized rivers of blood—the freezing of the entire landscape. He thought he was going mad.

In the middle of this maelstrom of fear, loneliness, alienation, and humiliation, he did something that took enormous courage. He "let

himself drop" (Jung, 1963: 179) into his inner world and into the shameful feelings and fantasies produced by it—trusting that perhaps this act of surrender might lead him back to his more whole and authentic self.

At first Jung was overwhelmed with the terrifying visions that erupted (see Jung, 2009, especially *Liber Primus*). Then he hit upon a method of engaging the visions by actively imagining himself in dialogue with the visionary figures that appeared, and listening attentively to what they had to say. The strange figures of his fantasies began to make themselves known to him. And instead of annihilation or psychic death, or the dissolution of his ego-personality, he found himself in interesting dialogues with them.

Finally, a figure came to greet him who seemed to have superior wisdom—a kind of guide who confronted Jung in an "objective" manner, separate from the prejudices of his fears and anxious assumptions. Having met this figure, who he named Philemon, Jung said "I understood that there is something in me which can say things that I do not know and do not intend ... things which may even be directed against me." Philemon became a living presence for Jung. He went "walking up and down the garden with him" (Jung, 1963: 183).

The discovery of a source of intelligence and guidance in the unconscious brought Jung a sense of wholeness that he had not had before. Then, toward the end of this period of struggle with his inner images, he had a dream which helped still more. This dream "settled it" for Jung. He later drew a picture of this dream's central image and called it "Window on Eternity" (Jung, 1963: 197–8).

In the dream he found himself in a dark, sooty city at night in the winter and it was raining. He realized he was in Liverpool. A number of other Swiss accompanied him. In order to get to the "real city" they had to climb up from the harbor, where they were walking, to a kind of plateau:

> There they found a broad square dimly illuminated by street lights and into this square many streets converged so that the various quarters of the city were arranged radially around the square. In the center was a round pool and in the middle of it a small island. While everything round about was obscured by rain, fog, smoke and dimly lit darkness, the little island blazed with sunlight. On it stood a single tree, a magnolia in a shower of reddish blossoms. It was as though the tree stood in the sunlight and was at the same time the source of light.

Jung's companions commented on the abominable weather, and obviously did not see the tree. They spoke of another Swiss who was living in Liverpool, and expressed surprise that he should have settled here. Jung himself was carried away by the beauty of the flowering tree and the sunlit island and thought, "I know very well why he has settled here." (Jung, 1963: 197–8).

About this dream Jung reports:

> This dream represented my situation at the time. I can still see the grayish-yellow raincoats, glistening with the wetness of the rain. Everything was extremely unpleasant, black and opaque, just as I felt then. But I had had a vision of unearthly beauty, and that is why I was able to live at all. Liverpool is the "pool of life."

Jung continues:

> The "liver" according to an old view, is the seat of life, that which "makes to live." This dream brought with it a sense of finality. I saw that here the goal had been revealed. One could not go beyond the center. The center is the goal, and everything is directed toward that center. Through this dream I understood that the Self is the principle and archetype of orientation and meaning. Therein lies its healing function. For me, this insight signified an approach to the center and therefore to the goal. Out of it emerged a first inkling of my personal myth. Without such a vision I might perhaps have lost my orientation and been compelled to abandon my undertaking. After the break with Freud I had taken a plunge into the unknown.... I knew nothing, but I took the step into darkness. When that happens, and then such a dream comes, one feels it as an act of grace.
>
> (Jung, 1963: 199)

It was as if, in the midst of Jung's darkest and most fragmented time, he had somehow found the courage to open himself to the alienated parts of himself that he most feared. At this point, some super-ordinate wisdom from the deep unconscious with a vast repertoire of universal images at its disposal had said to him in a dream

> I can see your wholeness ... and in order to convince you of this, I'm going to present my image of your wholeness in universal imagery of aliveness, beauty, color, and light, all around a radiant center which has everything to do with you, and only with you. And the closer you get to this center of your own particular, individual, irreplaceable life—including your own abysmal sadness—the closer you get to me.

To feel known and seen like this gave Jung a sense of an objective "knower" in the psyche he called the Self. It is not surprising, then, that later, when he began to read alchemy, he found himself inspired by the alchemists' descriptions of how they were transformed after being seen by an "eye" which observes one from the depths of the soul—an eye or eyes that begin to shine out of the cooked *prima materia.*

In Gerhard Dorn, for example, a follower of Paracelsus, Jung (1947: para. 389) found the following comment:

> for the life, the light of man, shineth in us, albeit dimly, and as though in darkness. It is not to be extracted from us, yet it is in us and not of us, but of Him to Whom it belongs, Who deigns to make us his dwelling place.... He has implanted that light in us that we may see in its light ... the light.... Thus truth is to be sought not in ourselves, but in the image of God which is within us.

Jung's ego-orientation had been "broken," but **through** this brokenness he had glimpsed the light of a super-ordinate **wholeness** in the background of the personality. Like Dante, he had made his descent into Hell, confronted Dis and found his way out again, toward the light.

Jung's later description of wholeness

In an obscure letter to a prominent Chicago social worker named Ruth Topping, Jung later (1959a) elaborated his understanding of wholeness. Jung had been asked to clarify a statement he made in a Chicago newspaper:

> Among all my patients in the second half of life ... every one of them fell ill because he had lost what the living religions of every age have given their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook.

Miss Topping had wondered how Jung would define "religious outlook." Here is Jung's reply:

> When you study the mental history of the world, you see that people since times immemorial had a general teaching or doctrine about the wholeness of the world. Originally and down to our days, they were considered to be holy traditions taught to the young people as a preparation for their future life. This has been the case in primitive tribes as well as in highly differentiated civilizations. The teaching had always a "philosophical" and "ethical" aspect.
>
> In our civilization this spiritual background has gone astray. Our Christian doctrine has lost its grip to an appalling extent, chiefly because people don't understand it any more. *Thus one of the most important instinctual activities of our mind has lost its object.*
>
> As these views deal with the world as a whole, they create also a wholeness of the individual, so much so, that for instance a primitive tribe loses its vitality, when it is deprived of its specific religious outlook. People are no more rooted in their world and lose their

> orientation. They just drift. That is very much our condition too. The need for a meaning of their lives remains unanswered, because *the rational, biological goals are unable to express the irrational wholeness of human life.* Thus life loses its meaning. That is the problem of the "religious outlook" in a nutshell.
>
> The problem itself cannot be settled by a few slogans. It demands concentrated attention, much mental work and, above all, patience, the rarest thing in our restless and crazy time. (Emphasis added).

I have italicized the most important sentences in this statement. The first is "Thus one of the most important instinctual activities of our mind has lost its object." What does Jung mean by this statement? To answer this question we have to understand that in psychoanalytic language, all instinctual drives, wishes, or affects are understood to be "satisfied" by certain "objects." The hunger instinct is satisfied by food, the sexual instinct is satisfied by the longed-for sexual object, the infant's instinct for attachment is satisfied by the dependable and interactive mother, etc. But what if there were an instinct for spiritual fulfillment in the personality? How would that be satisfied?

Jung came to believe that all human beings are equipped with a religious instinct that is just as strong and important as the other instincts, and that the "objects" of this instinct are those mysterious numinous experiences at the core of all the living religions of the world. "Physical hunger needs a real meal," Jung writes, "and spiritual hunger needs a numinous content" (Jung, 1959b: para. 652). In fact, Jung says that the instinct for wholeness and unity is "the most important of the fundamental instincts" (Jung, 1959b: para. 653). Nonetheless, it plays the least conspicuous part in contemporary consciousness because it is contaminated by two much more obvious instincts: sexuality and power. Therefore, the instinct for wholeness "requires for its evidence a more highly differentiated consciousness, thoughtfulness, reflection, responsibility, and sundry other virtues" (Jung, 1959b: para. 653). Otherwise the instinct for wholeness will remain hidden in our secular, materialistic world.

The second statement in Jung's letter that I have highlighted is "the rational, biological goals are unable to express the irrational wholeness of human life." Here, in a nutshell, is the central claim behind Jung's radical departure from the scientific/rational psychologies of Freud and his followers. Freud, as "biologist of the mind" (Sulloway, 1979), set out to ground his theory in the biological urges of the body/mind, including the body's instinctual drives and how they were tamed and overridden by the higher rational faculties of human civilization, with its internalized parent, the Superego. As we shall see, Freud's was an analytic left-hemisphere-dominated perspective while Jung's personal experience of his No. 2 personality (see Chapter 8) and his whole mytho-poetic approach relied heavily upon the right. Freud insisted on one world. Jung argued for two.

Contributions of neuroscience toward an understanding of wholeness

Jung's reference to the "irrational wholeness of human life" points us in the direction of recent studies in neuroscience and the relative contributions of the right vs. the left hemispheres of the brain to our understanding of two separate "worlds" that make up our own wholeness and that are part of the binocular vision we are seeking in this book.

Iain McGilchrist

In a groundbreaking work that summarizes recent research in neuroscience, Iain McGilchrist (2009) has described the two worlds presented by the right and left hemisphere and then elaborated these two different modes of experiencing as they have been reflected in the philosophy, literature, art, and science of the last two millennia of Western cultural development. The result is a profound and illuminating new lens through which to see our own history, including the history of psychoanalysis—rather like putting on 3D glasses in an otherwise 2D movie.

McGilchrist describes the worlds brought into being by each hemisphere as different ways of paying attention to reality. This is important because "the kind of attention we pay actually alters the world: we are, literally, partners in creation" (McGilchrist, 2009: 5).

> the brain has to attend to the world in two completely different ways, and in so doing to bring two different worlds into being. In the one [mediated by the right hemisphere] we *experience* – the live, complex, embodied, world of individual, always unique beings, forever in flux, a net of interdependencies, forming and reforming wholes, a world with which we are deeply connected. In the other [mediated by the left hemisphere] we experience our experience in a special way: a "re-presented" version of it, containing now static, separable, bounded but essentially fragmented entities, grouped into classes, on which predictions can be based. This kind of attention isolates, fixes and makes each thing explicit by bringing it under the spotlight of attention.
>
> (McGilchrist, 2009: 31)

While acknowledging these separate yet complementary perspectives, McGilchrist eschews the easy dualism that creeps into studies of hemispheric differentiation in popular summaries, i.e., for example that the left hemisphere is all about words and the right about visual images. It is not that simple. The hemispheres each deal with both words and images, but in different ways. Instead of locating discrete and contrasting functions, the brain's two hemispheres complement one another across the

whole spectrum of human activity and require us to *attend* to the world "in two ways at once" (McGilchrist, 2009: 30). Both hemispheres are involved in almost all mental processes, and each makes its absolutely essential contribution to our whole experience, providing that there is adequate communication between them.

Nonetheless, McGilchrist argues that *at the level of experience* (McGilchrist, 2009: 10) each hemisphere has its own way of mediating or understanding the world and the right hemisphere, which matures earlier than the left and is "on-line" in early childhood, has a kind of primacy in our evolution and development as a species. Being the hemisphere that is more richly connected to the primitive centers in the brain stem and limbic system, it seems to be "earlier" both ontogenetically and phylogenetically. Hence it is the real *master hemisphere*, with the left hemisphere its *emissary*. Historically, however, partly through the profound influence of science over the last 400 years, the left hemisphere has become dominant and has usurped the role of its master, claiming its vision of the world as the only "truth." It has forgotten its dependence on the right hemisphere and makes claims for truth that are not supported by a more balanced, inclusive understanding. Hence we live in a left-hemisphere-dominated world.

McGilchrist demonstrates that the right hemisphere of the brain tends to see things in wholes rather than in parts. It sees things as they are embedded in a context—in relationship to other things (McGilchrist, 2009: 49). Its attention is broader than the left hemisphere and it can take in the configurational aspects of a whole gestalt (see McGilchrist, 2009: 4, 46, 60). In this sense it is more integrative. It is constantly searching for patterns in things and often its understanding of the world is based on complex pattern recognition (McGilchrist, 2009: 47). It therefore has a greater capacity than the left hemisphere to hold several ambiguous possibilities in view without prematurely closing on a particular outcome or interpretation. This tolerance—even preference—for novelty and uncertainty accounts for the right hemisphere's preference for metaphor over literal meaning (McGilchrist, 2009: 82). It mediates an understanding of the world based on empathy, inter-subjectivity, and metaphor, and is concerned with individual unique instances of things (McGilchrist, 2009: 51) rather than generalities or impersonal categories.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the right hemisphere is more concerned with meaning—as a whole, and in context (McGilchrist, 2009: 70). Wherever non-literal meaning, like metaphor, irony, or humor is perceived, the right hemisphere is involved. Correspondingly, it understands the indirect, connotative language of poetry, whereas the left hemisphere specializes in the denotative language of science (McGilchrist, 2009: 71). The right hemisphere specializes in non-verbal communication, dealing with whatever is implicit. It is the hemisphere that mediates the unconscious mind, including the dreaming mind. It privileges the primacy of

experience, the "presencing" of what is new before the left hemisphere seeks to "re-present" it (McGilchrist, 2009: 50). This presencing includes experiences of the ineffable, of awe, mystery, the "otherness" of nature (McGilchrist, 2009: 56) and paradox—all of which are often perplexing to the left hemisphere, which has a tendency to "reduce" these complex or inchoate experiences to a known thing. For example, mystical experience, or the so-called oceanic feeling, which is not a problem for the right hemisphere may be explained away or interpreted by the left hemisphere.

The right hemisphere has a closer affinity with the emotions and bodily experience and what has been called body-image or "self-concept." It is more connected to the limbic system—an ancient subcortical system involved in the experience of emotions. It is also better connected than the left hemisphere to other subcortical centers such as the hypothalamic–pituitary axis, the neuro-endocrine interface between the body and emotion. Thus it is more involved in the unconscious processing and organizing of the autonomic nervous system and hence of bodily based emotional experience (McGilchrist, 2009: 58–9). In short, it is deeply connected to the self as embodied. Only the right hemisphere has a whole-body image (McGilchrist, 2009: 66). It is the right hemisphere that interprets facial expression, prosody, gesture, and the non-verbal aspects of communication (McGilchrist, 2009: 59), including the child's early sense of identity through interaction with the mother's face (McGilchrist, 2009: 60). The right hemisphere matures earlier and is more involved than the left in "almost every aspect of the development of mental functioning in early childhood and of the self as a social, empathic being" (McGilchrist, 2009: 88).

Its affinity with emotional life explains why the right hemisphere also mediates our experience of music. Because music is grounded in the body and so communicative of emotion, it is naturally mediated by the right hemisphere. Music would be impossible to "hear" without the right hemisphere, which is involved in the perception of rhythm, harmony (McGilchrist, 2009: 75), and the relationship among discrete notes in the flow of a melody: "Music consists entirely of relations, 'betweenness'" (McGilchrist, 2009: 72).

While the right hemisphere sees things in context—in relationship to everything surrounding them (McGilchrist, 2009: 49)—and hence in holistic gestalts—the left hemisphere removes things from context and analyzes them in "bits," assigning words to these bits and organizing them into categories, describable in denotative language. Tied more closely to the explicit and more conscious elements of our mental life (McGilchrist, 2009: 71), it is primarily concerned with what it knows, whereas the right is concerned with what it experiences (McGilchrist, 2009: 78).

As the "hemisphere of abstraction" (McGilchrist, 2009: 50) the left hemisphere tends to distance itself from the world, leading to an increasingly mechanistic fragmented, decontextualized world (McGilchrist, 2009: 6)—but

also a very powerful one where knowledge about how things work leads to manipulation of them for purposes of operational power and control. Civilization would have been impossible without the contribution of the left hemisphere and its language:

> The values of clarity and fixity are added by the processing of the left hemisphere, which is what makes it possible for us to control, manipulate or use the world. For this, attention is directed and focused; the wholeness is broken into parts; the implicit is unpacked; language becomes the instrument of serial analysis; things are categorized and become familiar. Affect is set aside, and superseded by cognitive abstraction; the conscious mind is brought to bear on the situation; thoughts are sent to the left hemisphere for expression in words and the metaphors are temporally lost or suspended; the world is re-presented in a now static and hierarchically organized form. This enables us to have knowledge to bring the world into resolution, but it leaves what it knows denatured and decontextualised.
>
> (McGilchrist, 2009: 195)

True wholeness

We might conclude from these descriptions that the right hemisphere is responsible for our experience of wholeness and that the "longing" for wholeness described by Jung and others is simply a longing for return to the experience-world of the right hemisphere, which was left behind in childhood as soon as language and speech (and left-hemispheric dominance) were acquired. (This would be like Freud's regression theory, i.e., our wish to return to the early undifferentiated states of infancy and childhood.) But this is not the case. The real "wholeness" that we seem to aspire to involves a balance *between* the hemispheres, i.e., between the worlds *after* they are differentiated (see McGilchrist, 2009: 195ff.).

McGilchrist emphasizes that

> the right hemisphere deals with the world *before* separation, division, analysis has transformed it into something else, before the left hemisphere has re-presented it. It is not that the right hemisphere connects—because what it reveals was never separated; it does not synthesize—what was never broken down into parts; it does not integrate—what was never less than whole.
>
> (McGilchrist, 2009: 179)

The experience of the wholeness that Jung is describing and for which there is a universal "longing" in the human psyche, is a wholeness that *follows* the division and differentiation mediated by the left hemisphere. What

begins in the right hemisphere's holistic experience-world "is 'sent' to the left hemisphere's world for processing, but must be 'returned' to the world of the right hemisphere where a new synthesis can be made" (McGilchrist, 2009: 195). When this happens, things become meaningfully alive again. The parts, once differentiated, are subsumed again in the whole, just like a musician must break down the parts of a musical score in practice in order to re-unify it once again in performance (McGilchrist, 2009: 195).

The faculty of the human psyche that enables us to do this, says McGilchrist, is the *faculty of creative imagination*. Split-brain patients have trouble in the area of imagination and dreaming. They seem unable to "pass information" back and forth between the hemispheres:

> The right hemisphere needs the left hemisphere in order to be able to "unpack" experience. Without its distance and structure, certainly, there could be, for example, no art, only experience—Wordsworth's description of poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquility" is just one famous reflection of this.... Similarly the immediate pre-conceptual sense of awe can evolve into religion only with the help of the left hemisphere: though, if the process stops there, all one has is theology, or sociology, or empty ritual: something else. It seems that, the work of division having been done by the left hemisphere, a new union must be sought, and for this to happen the process needs to be returned to the right hemisphere, so that it can live.
>
> (McGilchrist, 2009: 199)

An experience of wholeness is the result of this tripartite Hegelian process (thesis–antithesis–synthesis) and McGilchrist makes clear that the forces of integration and union in the psyche seem to be stronger than the forces that wish to divide:

> There is an asymmetry between the principles of division (left hemisphere) and unification (right hemisphere), ultimately in favor of union. Heidegger was not alone in seeing that beauty lies in the coming to rest of opposites, that have been sharply distinguished, in the connectedness of a harmonious unity. The need for ultimate unification of division with union is an important principle in all areas of life; it reflects the need not just for two opposing principles, but for their opposition ultimately to be harmonized.
>
> (McGilchrist, 2009: 200)

Trauma and anti-wholeness defenses

It becomes clear, as one reads McGilchrist's compelling survey, that the absence of a functioning right hemisphere (sometimes called "the

emotional brain") would leave us emotionally impoverished. The right hemisphere is centrally involved in the neural processing of emotions, including the neural circuitry of emotional regulation. It mediates our uniquely human ability "to express sadness through tears" (McGilchrist, 2009: 61) and in general, the right hemisphere seems to be more in tune with sadness and less with anger.

Unlike the left hemisphere, which seems to specialize in denial (McGilchrist, 2009: 85), the right hemisphere is more emotionally "competent" and involved in the suffering and working through of real emotional pain—an essential part of the working through of trauma: "When Lear cries 'Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?', we could reply, on one level, yes—a defect in the right prefrontal cortex" (McGilchrist, 2009: 86). In other words, injury to the right hemisphere leads to primitive defenses that in turn lead to a "hardening of the heart" and, through such hardening, to a variety of psychopathologies involving rigidified self-schemas and inner fragmentation. Body image disturbances (damage to the right hemisphere) lead to profoundly disturbing illnesses, such as body dysmorphia and anorexia nervosa (McGilchrist, 2009: 66) The "lack of capacity to recognize parts of the embodied self is always associated with right-hemisphere damage" (McGilchrist, 2009: 68).

Moreover, as McGilchrist clarifies, it is not just damage to the right hemisphere, but a lack of communication with the left that accounts for some forms of psychopathology. In alexithymia (no words for feelings), for example, the "problem arises from an inability of the [aroused] right hemisphere to communicate information to the left hemisphere" (McGilchrist, 2009: 62). And, he says, serious depression has been shown to involve relative hemispheric asymmetry favoring the right hemisphere (McGilchrist, 2009: 84).

These findings suggest a neurological basis for the defenses that I have described as the self-care system. The implication is that dissociative defenses either somehow impede hemispheric integration so that the optimal "flow" back and forth between the hemispheres is impeded, or that dissociation actually damages the right hemisphere, possibly impeding the normal circuitry through which the right hemisphere transmits its messages to higher centers in the brain.

Allan Schore

How, then, do these neurological effects come about on the level of the brain? What are the mechanisms through which the child's traumatic experiences (and subsequent dissociation) in early life impact the central nervous system and lead to anti-wholeness defenses?

In answer to these questions we find a treasure-trove of information in the voluminous research of Allan Schore, who has gathered together the relevant findings from across the psychological and neuro-biological

spectrum. Schore's three major books (1994, 2003a, 2003b) and numerous papers have documented again and again how the dissociation that follows trauma—usually defined as a separation of mental processes (thoughts, emotions, memory, and identity)—inevitably implicates the integrative functions of the brain in general and those of the right hemisphere, the "emotional brain," in particular (see Schore, 2011).

Schore reaches this conclusion through an extensive review of recent findings in attachment theory and shows how this literature provides evidence that unifies psychodynamic theories of trauma and dissociation on the one hand, with contemporary neuro-biological findings on the other. Sometimes called "the American Bowlby," Allan Schore has helped restore Bowlby's attachment theory to its rightful place at the center of a contemporary psychoanalytic developmental psychology. Reviewing literally hundreds of studies, Schore provides persuasive evidence that the early infant–mother attachment relationship—including those subtle, nonverbal processes such as gaze, prosidy, and touch—directly influences the early organization of the limbic system and the right hemisphere of the infant brain (Schore, 2003a: 73). Optimal infant–mother attachment experiences constitute "dyadic emotional regulation" (Schore 2003a: 64ff.) which are later internalized as the child's self-regulatory capacity. By contrast, insecure or disorganized infant–mother attachment experiences result in an arrest in affective development and in impaired capacity for emotional self-regulation (Schore 1994: 373ff.).

In Schore's view, the etiology of trauma is directly attributable to failed *relational events* in which the totally dependent infant, relying on emotional resonance with the mother for the interactive modulation and regulation of its negative affect states, is left in fearful hyper-arousal, leading to states of dissociation that in turn impact the developing right hemisphere. The intense states of hyper-arousal and fear that result from traumatic attachment experiences have a detrimental impact on the developing right brain during the critical period of its growth, and the result is lasting impairment in the limbic-autonomic circuits involved in regulating emotional states.

Thus, *early attachment experiences between infant and caregiver shape the actual development of the brain*—especially the right hemisphere, which is dominant and "on line" for the first 18 months of life. The right hemisphere is also more directly connected to primitive emotional centers in the brain stem and limbic system, as well as to the autonomic system which regulates states of hyper- or hypo-arousal. Because the right hemisphere is so richly connected to the brain stem—hence to the body, as well as to the unconscious—it is the right hemisphere that connects the growing child to emotionally salient experiences and serves as the "glue" holding together the implicit self-system—the "biological substrate of the human unconscious" (see Schore, 2011: 81; also Schore, 2003b: 276). Without the "glue" provided by the integrative functions of the right hemisphere, a

coherent sense of oneself dissolves. Anti-wholeness defenses take over and these either resist integration or actively dismember an earlier integration that can no longer be tolerated.

While Schore tends to locate the effects of trauma and the dissociation that follows it in the early-forming right hemisphere—including the "higher" orbito-frontal cortex (see Schore, 2009: 9)—early trauma has clear bilateral implications. In my own experience—corroborated by the work of others such as Ferenczi (1988), Winnicott (1949), Corrigan and Gordon (1995)—many latency-aged children with a history of early trauma have been catapulted out of their emotional and embodied selves into a precocious reliance upon "higher" rational mental functions (left hemisphere) where they can control and/or deny the full impact of their traumatic experience or give it alternative "interpretations." As McGilchrist noted, the left hemisphere is the hemisphere of denial (McGilchrist, 2009: 85).

Schore's findings give partial support to this hypothesis:

> Although dissociation is triggered by subcortical mechanisms it is regulated by higher corticolimbic centers. Pathological dissociation is the product of an inefficient frontolimbic system that can not regulate the onset and offset of the dissociative response. Rather, for long periods disinhibited lower subcortical centers, especially the right amygdal, drive the dissociative response.
>
> (Schore, 2009: 15)

Thus, in terms of the self-care system, the tyrannical inner "voices" that articulate the negative accusations from within and the internalized "objects" that carry these voices might appear to be negatively valenced left-hemispheric inner objects. By tyrannizing the inner world with shaming "interpretations" of the child's experience, they continue to hyper-arouse the amygdala-driven dissociative response (right hemisphere), preventing correction by more benign experiences. (Anyone who has tried to help trauma survivors by offering positive, reassuring interpretations will have come face to face with this frustrating reality.)

It could also be that the negative introjects of the self-care system represent "higher" right-hemispheric inner "objects" whose primitive archetypal energies and affects tyrannize the trauma survivor. While perhaps personified, "universalized," and "mentalized" by the left hemisphere, they may get their marching orders (so to speak) from implicit procedural memories encoded in higher orbito-frontal right hemispheric engrams. This might account for the daimonic nature of the inner objects that either haunt or hallow the inner world of the self-care system as I have conceived it. In any case, the mechanism of dissociation is likely to make use of the brain's bilateral division. Indirect support for this idea comes from Francine Shapiro's (2001) EMDR (eye movement desensitization

and reprocessing) therapy that often provides effective treatment for PTSD patients by stimulating both hemispheres (eye movements, tones, or tapping) during the recovery of dissociated material.

Allan Schore's research is important not just for the etiological understanding it brings, but because it underscores the importance of "right brain to right brain" communication between therapist and patient (Schore, 2003b: 263; 2011, 78) in the *undoing* of those anti-wholeness defenses that we are exploring in this chapter. Because of the brain's plasticity, such repair is possible. But it depends less on insight (left) than on experience-in-the-body (right); less on technical vocabulary and more on metaphor; less on abstractions and more on immersion in the particularity of experience; less on the past and more on the present moment; less on analysis of the patient's explicit memories and more on his/her implicit experience in dreams and other imaginal products; less on the patient's separate psyche and more on the paradoxical "potential space" that emerges "between" the psychoanalytic partners.

The following clinical example of my work with a creative and highly educated professional woman demonstrates the operation of "anti-wholeness" defenses as they were established around a painful memory from her past. It also demonstrates the transformation of these defenses as the partially unconscious feelings associated with this experience are reintegrated with the help of a witness in the psychotherapy process. Finally, a concluding dream brings in the "something more" that is often a marker for the experience of wholeness—as Jung experienced with his Liverpool dream.

The case of Cynthia

"Cynthia" as I shall call my patient, was a divorced woman in her fifties who consulted me after her previous analyst had become afflicted with Alzheimer's disease and had subsequently died. Cynthia had worked for many years with this benign and fatherly man who specialized in bio-energetic analysis. She was understandably depressed at his passing, for he had been very helpful to her and she had deeply admired him and his work. Cynthia had begun her analysis in her thirties after her husband had an affair with another woman. She felt partially responsible for his infidelity because of her sexual constriction ("frigid" was the word she used) and she thought she'd better do something about it or her marriage would dissolve permanently.

To her gratitude, her sexual response emerged rather quickly after only a short period of bio-energetic analysis with its focus on embodied affects. The help this therapy gave her released many of the constricting defenses she had developed against her healthy pleasurable sensations. However, as the years went by, with her failed marriage long over, she began to wonder why she was continuing with her now rapidly aging analyst, to whom she

felt such loyalty. When he subsequently died, she was left with grief but also, paradoxically, with some relief, which reminded her of a similar mixture of feelings she had experienced after her father had passed away years earlier. She wanted to examine this.

As our work began, after gathering a personal history I encouraged Cynthia to remember her dreams and to jot them down in a notebook; together with her reflections, including any feeling-reactions to our time together. In all the years of her previous analysis she had never worked explicitly with her dreams. To her surprise, she began to dream regularly and she was amazed at what her unconscious seemed to be offering. One year into our work, she brought the following dream:

> A former lover and I are in bed, hungrily kissing, and I notice a purple vapor appears to be escaping from a ceiling lamp. I fear this may be lethal but we're not sure. We prepare to leave. Then I'm in a car driving in the general vicinity of my childhood farm-home where we lived when I was between 7 and 17 years old. I can't find the steering wheel but the car seems to be driving itself and it goes directly to my old home, slows down, and pulls into the driveway. Another car follows behind us. Suddenly a bunch of men dressed in black pour out of the other car. They shoot sharp darts at me and appear to be jeering menacingly at me. They surround the car so I can't get out. It appears in one way or another that they'll get me.

Cynthia had few associations to this (in her words) "bizarre" dream. We reviewed the history with her ex-lover, her previous sexual problems, etc. The co-incidence of sexual hunger and the fear of something lethal pointed back to the prior sexual constriction, but we did not understand why her sexual pleasure in the dream should constellate such a life-and-death threat. The source of the vapors was also the ceiling lamp, ordinarily a source of light or consciousness. Could it be, we wondered, that becoming conscious of something sexual might be associated with a mortal threat? And what about the men in black? She had no association to them except they seemed like "mafia" figures—a gang—united by the apparent purpose of preventing her from getting out of her car.

As I sat with her and pondered the dream, I wondered what the "auto-piloted" car might "know" that she didn't. It appeared to be driving itself, as if it was in possession of some *intention* or direction unknown to her ego but important to the unconscious and possibly to some potential wholeness that might involve the recovery of a lost part of her own childhood. Whatever this lost part was, I speculated to myself, might be a dire threat to the men in black who seem not to want her to encounter anything in that childhood home to which the automatic car had taken her.

I mentioned these speculative thoughts, but they did not seem to lead anywhere. Then, in a more focused intervention, I asked Cynthia *what, if anything, had gone on in that house that a part of her would not want her to tell me.* She looked blank for a moment, then flushed with embarrassment and recognition. The following story then emerged.

Starting when she was 10 or 11, with her mother off at church on Sundays, her father would come into her room and remind her of some bad behavior of hers from the past week. Then he would pull down her pants, and spank her, a ritual that obviously aroused him. This went on for years, even after her menses, until she finally stopped it.

As she talked about this in session she realized that she had never really let herself feel the full impact of what this meant to her. She had known of these ritual spankings intellectually, but the emotional impact of these events had not been experienced until this moment when the *affect* embedded in these shameful memories had been linked to the conscious memory. This started to happen as she felt the safety and containment of her analysis and then her "vehicle" in the dream, on automatic pilot, took her right back to the scene of the crime. This integrative activity was too much for the men in black who, as "dis-integrative" forces in the psyche, tried to prevent further linking.

Cynthia suddenly felt flooded with shame and outrage. She felt so betrayed! Here was the man she had adored as a little girl—her handsome theatrical father who ran a local theater and starred in many of the major roles, who read plays to her on the porch in the summer evenings, and who made her his "pal" on the weekend errands around town. How could he have done this to her! And it wasn't just the relationship with her father that was injured. A major rupture had occurred in the continuity of her whole existence as a person. She now housed a major interruption of her life ... "girl interrupted" she said.

The spankings became ritualized. Then her father wanted her to spank him, which she refused. Later, just before he died, he had brought up the spankings and asked her if they were pleasurable for her, too. She felt disgusted and furious at him, but she couldn't let herself show this. She said "no" and left the room.

This discovery of a childhood secret, which the men in black in the dream clearly did not want her to remember, opened up a whole terrain of her childhood memory that had been obscured. Cynthia recalled now how lonely she had been after this—how alienated from herself and her friends—how remote she had felt from her parents, how she'd walk in the pastures alone and to an old mill across the street, weighted down by some nameless sadness and melancholy. Everything felt wrong. How, she wondered, had she ever come down to dinner after this? She was somehow stained now, contaminated—full of an anguished longing. It was the end of her childhood.

In the aftermath of this session and our continuing exploration of this traumatic event, my patient felt suddenly filled with anxiety in the

night—unprotected, vulnerable, and very young. Feelings of being terribly hurt, like a little girl again, would alternate with feelings of self-disgust and then red-hot fury, fury at her father, anger at herself for having taken such good care of her previous analyst for years and years and never getting to this material.

Cynthia was undoing her dissociation and undergoing a kind of "death" of herself as she previously knew herself to be. Phillip Bromberg (1998: 173) has noted the particular kind of grief this entails:

> Dissociation ... effectively obliterates, at least temporarily, the existence of that self to whom the trauma could occur, and it is in that sense like a "quasi-death." The rebuilding of linkages, the reentry into life, involves pain not unlike that of mourning. The return of life means the recognition and facing of death; not simply the death of one's early objects as real people, but the death of those aspects of self with which those objects have been united.... The pain accompanying this grief is extreme, among the most painful of life's experiences. We make this assumption because of the enormous psychological price that is paid to continue to avoid it.

In the transference during this time Cynthia reported wanting to become small so she could fit into my pocket and be carried around by me. For a period of time we increased the frequency of our sessions. She allowed herself to feel the healthy dependency feelings of that lost little girl in herself who had been forced to seal herself off from the unbearable memory. This period of working-through lasted a couple of months. There was a lot of grief and sadness and a newfound aggression directed toward a firmer resolve to live her whole life. Slowly other feelings emerged, good feelings, and a feeling of freedom from depression. The anguished longing was gone. She didn't need two glasses of wine to get to sleep anymore.

This dream illustrates the functioning of archetypal defenses (the men in black). They are "dis-integrative" factors in the psyche (see Chapter 3 and 9) attempting to de-link her from the wholeness of her life story because some parts of it are so painful. As such, they serve as "anti-wholeness" defenses and they are "made," so to speak, out of inverted aggression—aggression that could not be expressed to its actual object in Cynthia's adolescence. They demonstrate how the psyche repeats an early trauma. Betrayal by the father now becomes self-betrayal, i.e., a part of her has now become her inner betrayer, her inner antagonist. The "men in black" will not let her heal, will not let her become whole.

Speaking mytho-poetically, we might think of these men in black as "Mephistophelean" figures who had implicitly negotiated an *unconscious* pact with Cynthia's ego around the issue of suffering. They had agreed, in

effect, to protect her from the full impact of her experience, if she would just agree to suspend her awareness, i.e., not feel the feelings connected to what went on in that house. This meant a partial loss of soul, i.e., of her own vital aliveness. On some level, Cynthia had turned away from a full suffering awareness of her early experience. After trauma, the true suffering necessary for individuation is sometimes impossible and another kind of suffering is substituted—a chronic, addictive suffering "supervised" by the defensive system represented by these men in black.

Undoing her unconscious pact with the dark forces of the men in black and suffering a full awareness of her experience is what Cynthia did in her therapy. Thanks to her dream, we could now see what we were dealing with. Cynthia came to see that the self-destructive forces in her dreams were nothing to be afraid of. They were just her disowned aggression turned back on herself. They were not her fault, just her responsibility.

A few months later she had another dream:

> I'm in a car on a street with 3 lanes. The car is a vintage 1940s DeSoto Roadster similar to my mother's old car but with beautiful interior—all red. The top is down and I'm the only one in the car. I'm supposed to be driving but I'm rolled up in a comforter ... the car's moving very well on its own. I decide this won't do. I extricate myself from the comforter and put my hands on the steering wheel and my foot on the gas pedal.

This dream needed no interpretation from me. Cynthia recognized the repeating theme of the car on "automatic pilot" that was a part of her earlier dream with the men in black. She was pleased that in this dream she had taken charge, driving the car herself, i.e., taking a more active role in her life. The "comforter" she was wrapped up in, she thought, represented the comforting illusions of her "happy childhood" which conveniently left out the traumatic violation by her father. These comforting illusions were part of her continued unconsciousness—supported by none other than the men in black. They were no longer necessary as she claimed her own power and agency in an embodied, active way.

A final dream in this series takes us back to Jung's image of wholeness as "something more" than the simple integration of parts of one's personal story. In analytic therapy, the process of telling the personal story—shrouded as it always is with personal complexes and defensive constructions—slowly opens to a "truer" story or a more authentic story, or maybe only a "bigger" story. Naomi Remen (1996), in her book *Kitchen Table Wisdom*, underscores how important it is for us to tell our stories—over and over again—and to hear the stories of our ancestors and our parents and our friends, because, as she says, behind these personal stories is always the "One Story" (Remen, 1996: xxvii), the archetypal drama, the primordial human dream of wholeness, perhaps.

Cynthia and I got a glimpse of this "great story" later in her analysis through a dream which pointed toward a healing of the father complex. Cynthia's dream put her issue with her personal father in this larger context. This dream was in French, a language she loved and in which, as she put it, "things are said more beautifully than in English." She had spoken French in her youth and had spent a delightful summer in Paris as an exchange student. But she had forgotten most of the language. Something in her had not forgotten! The dream was in the first person:

> I am facing a man—younger than I am. I introduce myself: Je m'appelle Cynthia ([My name is Cynthia]. I am not fully dressed. My genital area is glowing. I then say—in French—J'ai oublié mon père. [I have forgotten my father]. We are looking into one another's eyes. He responds: Je connais vôtre père. [I know your father]. There is a sexual overtone to our communication.
>
> He is interested, and I find him interesting.
>
> The scene shifts to the outdoors and a field of flowers. They are gold with lots of blue. I am trying to express the unusualness and beauty of the flowers to the people who are with me. It is difficult in French, but I'm succeeding.

My patient had an immediate sense that this dream was important. It moved her. It was in a "foreign" language, more beautiful than her ego's language, yet familiar to her from her childhood. It also seemed to her that the forgotten father in her dream was not just her personal father but that the dream alluded to something more "spiritual." This larger reality had been "forgotten" as if the traumatic rupture with her actual father had also ruptured her connection to the Father who stands behind the personal father, the "Great Father" as American Indians called him or, in Jung's language, the central archetype of the Self (in its patriarchal form). Having forgotten this Father was equivalent to having suffered a rupture in her essential spirit—an injury to the ego–Self axis. The dream suggests that her healthy sexual response returns with the re-connection to this Father, made possible by the mediating figure—the man in the dream with whom all the Eros is flowing.

Cynthia had no associations to this man, although she wondered if this could be a stand-in for me in the transference, given that I had helped her to re-connect to the forgotten trauma with her father. We discussed this. Yet, as we explored this possibility, the figure in the dream felt "bigger" than the transference relationship. On reflection, she felt that her male partner in the dream was more like a new, inner partner—someone who "animates me from within," she said—hence a figure from the unconscious that Jung would call the creative Animus, a soul figure standing for life itself, a figure who united both her sexuality (body) and spirit (mind).

The last image of the dream is the beautiful field of blue and gold flowers that she is trying to describe to the people with her. "This scene was so beautiful that it made my heart ache," Cynthia reported,

> the kind of beauty that sometimes just overtakes you and renders you speechless. Still I am trying—in French, no less—it seems important that I find the words ... it's hard for me to convey what a beautiful dream this was ... it touches a dimension of life I used to feel sometimes as a child on the farm ... the golden light, the flowering fields, the evening song of the meadowlark ... it's like an essence of life that we have access to as children and then lose—yet here it is. It feels whole—like coming home.

This discovery of a larger presence—something ineffable, yet personally intimate—can make all the difference in the healing of trauma. In finding the courage to embrace her darkest secret and surrender to feelings that were heretofore unbearable, Cynthia had constellated something in the deep unconscious with a vast repertoire of archetypal images at its disposal, something that said to her in a dream

> I can see your wholeness. And in order to convince you of this, I'm going to present my awareness of your wholeness in universal imagery of the Father-experience with all its beauty and aliveness and sensuality. And I'm going to pour this into your dreaming sleep through exactly the father-wound where you were so hurt.

Conclusion

This vignette of my work with Cynthia provides an example of how the mundane, practical work of psychotherapy with its piecing together of the forgotten fragments of one's personal story brings a wholeness into view that transcends the parts—a kind of vertical axis intersecting the horizontal one. This came in the form of her new sense of erotic animation in the dream with the male stranger—a man who "knew" her father.

From the neurological findings cited above, we might imagine that Cynthia's traumatic violation by her father had been dissociated and that this dissociation had been encoded in certain interrupted circuits within the right hemisphere of her brain that would ordinarily help integrate the components of experience—affect, intellect, memory, identity. These interrupted circuits may have also occurred between the hemispheres because, as Cynthia said, she had explicit intellectual knowledge of her trauma (left hemisphere) but not the emotional knowledge implicit in the right. In other words, Cynthia had a "deforming mirror" held up by this experience with her father. This deforming mirror then became the same glass into which she looked for self-definition, i.e., it became an introjected

mirror and a distorting source of her own identity—her shame-burdened self-representation.

In working with Cynthia's ambivalence about her previous analyst, we found our way to the deeper unconscious ambivalence about her father, and uncovered its reasons. We also unmasked the intra-psychic defenses that kept the different parts of her experience from coming together in full consciousness (men in black). The implicit relational knowledge that came out of our dream work was encoded somewhere in her body/mind in the form of implicit awareness that became explicit through our "right brain to right brain" process together (Schore, 2011). The right brain mediates unconscious processes and, once in dialogue with the left hemisphere, opens up the meaning of dream-experience. Similarly, this meaning was not something available to either Cynthia or myself separately. It was "discovered" in our dialogue together.

Why the unknown dream-maker in the unconscious graces us with its healing presence through the intimate particularities of our traumatic woundings is one of the mysteries of the psyche that opens to us in our work with trauma. The transcendent dimension of wholeness seems to have special access to us through whatever is intensely *personal*, and especially those broken places where the continuity of our lives has been ruptured and unmediated by inter-personal provision.

In those places where we are broken we may be graced with the experience of wholeness. But if this is to happen, we will have to permit ourselves to surrender to the broken places again, now surrounded by a thorn-bush of defenses—men in black, for instance—who shout at us "Closed! Closed! Do Not Open—Ever Again!" and shoot poison darts at us if we try. Sometimes our courage fails us and we are not up to this surrender. Then life's tragedies are left to break us open once again, giving us a glimpse of the lost wholeness, however ambivalent we may be about it. Sometimes, with a special companion, a friend, an analyst, or with the blessings of art or poetry which may bring a heightened level of awareness, we may be able, as Cynthia was, to open what has been closed without it closing again. Then we may be graced by the presence of an Angel, or a Dream.

6

PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACHES TO THE INNER WORLD

Applying theory to the cases so far

We should always rent our theories—never buy them.
(Comment by Alan Roland in a talk to Psychology Interns, Manhattan V.A. Hospital, 1972)

A patient who was slowly recovering from her lifelong schizoid defenses and, like a baby chick, was beginning to poke her head out of the cocoon she had been living in, once asked incredulously *"Where have I been all this time?"* This question leads to some interesting speculations regarding the nature of the inner world—especially after the kind of defensive splitting of the ego that follows trauma in early childhood. Is the inner world a prison or a sanctuary—or both?

In *The Inner World of Trauma* (Kalsched, 1996), I emphasized the tyrannical, violent "presences" in the self-care system, and showed how the inner world overseen by them tends to become persecutory and negative unless propitious life circumstances or therapeutic help intervene. The negativity and destructiveness that take over the inner landscape seem to result from the infant's natural aggression which cannot be expressed outwardly or processed with its love-objects. Instead, as Fairbairn (1981: 115) has shown, this aggression is re-directed into the interior where it becomes the energy behind dissociation and splitting.

As a result of this oppression, the pre-traumatic innocent and generative "child" in the personality gets buried or imprisoned in the unconscious and is lost to the ego's ongoing development (loss of soul). Even worse, this dependent, regressed, and vulnerable part of the personality, now hiding in the somatic unconscious, is further attacked by the precociously grown-up, false, or "progressed self"—usually identified with the mind. Hence the archetypal theme that we saw in Chapter 2 of the child being either threatened with death, banished, "exposed," or abandoned.

In the present chapter we look at several psychoanalytic theorists who describe the inner world, and how they evaluate what they find there. With the exception of Fairbairn, these theorists' contributions to a psychospiritual understanding were unknown to me at the time I wrote *The Inner*

World of Trauma in 1996. The following summaries update my own thinking and briefly outline the contributions of each theorist that are relevant to the present investigation. As will become apparent, each analytic writer has a characteristic *attitude* toward the nature and function of our inner life. Some see the inner world primarily as a defense, albeit a necessary one. Others see it as more generative or as the source of our creativity and even our authentic selfhood. Fairbairn and Grotstein tend to privilege dreams as major out-picturings of our interior landscape. Both have been important contributors to the formulation of my own thinking about trauma and its self-care system. All the theorists below represent a spectrum of approaches that provide different answers to my patient's question, "Where have I been all this time?"

Ronald Fairbairn and inner persecution

Ronald Fairbairn, the founding inspiration and under-appreciated creative genius behind our understanding of the inner world and its "schizoid dynamics," derived his map of the different parts of the self from the dreams of several of his patients (see Fairbairn, 1981: 98–112, 216–22). One particular patient, who had suffered the early trauma of having been born with physical genital abnormalities (Fairbairn, 1981: 197–222) had a series of vivid dreams which she described simply as a "state of affairs dreams" (Fairbairn, 1981: 99). In these dreams, two personified figures kept appearing (1) "the mischievous boy," which the patient felt represented her own rebellious childish self; and (2) "the critic" who was usually a "serious, formidable, puritanical and aggressive woman of middle age." (Fairbairn, 1981: 216). Then there was a third figure—the observing ego of the patient herself, who was sometimes allied with the mischievous boy and sometimes with the critic.

Fairbairn realized that these figures corresponded easily with Freud's tripartite structure of the psyche: id, ego, and superego. However, a fourth figure began to appear in his patient's dreams, one the patient described as "the little girl" (Fairbairn, 1981: 217). This figure seemed to represent the natural, innocent child that the patient was never allowed to be in her actual childhood. And finally, a fifth figure appeared, designated by Fairbairn's patient as "the martyr."

From these "state of affair dreams" Fairbairn concluded that the personifications in dreams represented actually existing endopsychic situations and structures which must be regarded as typical:

> I tentatively formulated the view that all the figures appearing in dreams represented either parts of the dreamer's own personality (conceived in terms of ego, super-ego, and id) or else identifications on the part of the ego. A further development of this view was to the effect that dreams are essentially, not wish-fulfillments,

> but dramatizations or "shorts" (in the cinematographic sense) of situations existing in inner reality.
>
> (Fairbairn, 1981: 99)

Fairbairn went on to say that the "actors" in these shorts represent

> either parts of the ego or internalized objects and that the situations depicted in dreams represent relationships existing between endopsychic structures; and the same applies to situations depicted in waking phantasies.
>
> (Fairbairn, 1981: 99)

One of Fairbairn's most important ideas concerning what he calls the endopsychic structure is that *the original splitting of the ego and its objects (leading to the inner figures) occurs when the infant's early love feels rejected.* This experience triggers a severing of the original object/mother into an accepting object and a rejecting one, as well as a corresponding split in the ego connected to these objects. The infant's conclusion that its love is "bad" leads to the inevitable rejection of the child-like part of the psyche (the mischievous boy in the above example) by what Fairbairn calls the internal saboteur (the critic). The other side of the infant's ambivalence toward the caretaker is the "little girl" representing the patient's pre-traumatic innocence and the "martyr" who seems to represent an untransformed portion of the infant's omnipotence and idealization of the "good" object/mother.

Fairbairn came to believe that the traumatized child internalized his experiences with "bad objects" in order to (1) control them and (2) to keep his outer objects idealized and "good," i.e., worthy of his love. The resulting defensive inner system of part-objects, Fairbairn felt, replicated outer object-relations and memorialized them as internal psychic structures.

So if a child's love has been traumatically rejected, his/her inner world would contain a split self-representation (mischievous boy/little girl) either persecuted and/or protected by a split object-representation (critic/martyr), thus replicating the outer trauma. Fairbairn believed that this internal system explained why abused children who were innocent of wrongdoing always felt "bad" when the memory of their traumatic victimization came up. Their feelings of guilt and shame derived from the fact that their love had felt traumatically invalidated. They concluded, therefore, that it was their a-priori badness that led to their rejection. In the inner world, this a-priori "badness" surrounded them with split-off and repressed "bad objects." The therapeutic goal was to make this whole system conscious through the release of bad objects from the unconscious, in the presence of a "good" object in the transference. A case illustrating how this works was reported in Chapter 3 (the case of Helen).

Fairbairn's idea that traumatic relationships in the child's life are recreated within picks up Ferenczi's and Anna Freud's early emphasis upon the child's "identification with the aggressor" (see Ferenczi, 1933; Freud, 1967). Aggression that rightfully belonged "in the world" as a healthy impulse toward an outer abuser, was inverted back into the psyche, attacking the animated child inside the system and leading to the psychic equivalent of autoimmune disease. As Fairbairn aptly puts it, "the child uses a maximum of his aggression to subdue a maximum of his libidinal need" (Fairbairn, 1981: 115).

The inner world remains mostly persecutory and its function is primarily defensive.

This means that its affective tone is mostly negative ("bad") and persecutory. However, as we have seen in some of the above cases, this is not always so. The inner world can just as often be a sanctuary for positive, "innocent" childhood self-states (my patient with the "baby in the cage" dream in Chapter 2; Mike's long-lost prodigal "sons" in Chapter 4) or can be a place where soul-saving protection is given by "guardian angels" (Jennifer and Genvieve Foster in Chapter 1), life-saving visions (Katarina in Chapter 1), or soul-holding wise animals (Dellie's "Pony" in Chapter 2).

Fairbairn's "object-relational" approach is therefore limited and one-sided. In his view, there is nothing in the psyche that is not first in the world. This leaves out the mytho-poetic nature of the psyche altogether. Jung and his followers offer another alternative, namely that the psyche spontaneously *personifies* its affects (both good and bad) around form-giving "structures" that are universal and that while the inner "persons" of the psyche may be constellated by personal experience in the real world, they are not reducible to outer persons alone.[1] This is why the "child" image we have been exploring in the last four chapters is both a fact (of the dreamer's childhood) and also something "more," i.e., a symbol of everything the "child" has ever represented in human culture. The child represents both this world and another ineffable world *simultaneously*. The child *animates* our experience with something more than just our memories. It finds its true life "between the worlds."

John Steiner and psychic retreats

Fairbairn's idea of the inner world as a derivative or transposition from the outer world is true also for John Steiner, who has written an important book on *Psychic Retreats* (1993). Steiner's description of psychic retreats and their relation to trauma is similar to my own formulations regarding the *self-care system*, although I did not know of his work at the time of writing *The Inner World of Trauma*. However, there are important differences between his ideas and mine, which I would like to detail.

Steiner describes a group of mostly borderline or psychotic patients whose defenses have created a kind of autistic enclave, sanctuary, or

refuge, within which they can hide, avoiding anxiety and pain and often emotional contact with the analyst. From this retreat, says Steiner, it is "sometimes possible to observe how they emerge with great caution like a snail coming out of its shell and retreat once more if contact leads to pain or anxiety" (Steiner, 1993: 1). Steiner suggests that such retreats are represented in dreams as "places" such as caves, fortresses, or islands on the one hand and as groups of people such as a business organization, religious sect, totalitarian government, or Mafia-like gangs, on the other (Steiner, 1993: 2). I can confirm such dream images in many of my own cases, which is why I used the word "system" to characterize this trauma defense.

For Steiner the system is constructed mostly to avoid suffering, but then because of its isolating effect and its inner violent, sado-masochistic nature, it causes further suffering. Like Fairbairn, he makes the important contribution that the "system" serves the function of binding, neutralizing, and controlling primitive destructiveness:

> Traumatic experiences with violence or neglect in the environment leads to the internalization of violent disturbed objects which at the same time serve as suitable receptacles for the projection of the individual's own destructiveness.
>
> (Steiner, 1993: 4)

Steiner feels that such pathological organizations are a universal aspect of the defensive make-up of all individuals. They stultify the personality and become major forces of resistance to growth and development both inside and outside analysis.

While he admits that the psychic retreat may serve as a refuge for a more "positive" dependent part of the personality, Steiner is highly dubious about such protection leading to any kind of positive result, and he does not deal explicitly with the great value that this "dependent part" might carry for the personality as a whole. The retreat, he says, is more likely to supply seductive or even addictive escape in which reality does not have to be faced and "phantasy and omnipotence can exist unchecked" (Steiner, 1993: 3). If the system provides containment, it is likely to be a kind of "perverse" containment offered by some kind of inner protector who is really an imposter, leading the naive ego into oblivion (Steiner, 1993: 8). Steiner's attitude makes the inner system "bad" and liberation from it "good."

As an overall goal for our patients, we might agree with this goal of better adaptation to reality, but by pathologizing psychic retreats, Steiner may miss the adaptive importance of the system in the first place and the fact that it can serve as a "way station" along the path of individuation. Defenses are organized for a reason. They are life-saving for the psyche, just like the immune system is life-saving for the body. In the clinical

vignettes reviewed in the previous chapters, we have seen cases where an inner "child" regresses into an inner sanctuary in order to preserve a sacred core of personality from further violation or to keep it out of unbearable suffering. Granted, the cutting off of this core of aliveness from the ego's normal functioning leaves profound deficits in affective competence and ego agency. But something is being saved for future growth. In Chapter 7 we will explore how the "innocence" of this regressed part of the personality is protected by dissociation, and we will witness its encapsulated life "on another planet" until such time as it can risk experience in this world.

Steiner's suspicions of his patients' use of psychic retreats as pathological escapes seems to parallel a similar feeling of suspicion he feels toward their exquisite hypersensitivity and their resulting rapid withdrawals from some of his interpretations.[2] Reading his case vignettes, one is left with a sense that the analytic work devolves into a kind of power-struggle with the stubbornly devoted analyst pitting his dreaded interpretations against the manipulative defensive system with which the patient is identified. One does not get the sense that the hypersensitivities of the patient might represent essential aspects of his/her core sense of aliveness or that this vulnerable core might need compassionate understanding from something equally sensitive in the therapist. These patients have most likely heard all their lives that they are "too sensitive" or that their extrasensory capacities and anomalous knowing of certain "invisible things" are crazy or disturbed. To have this attitude repeated in their analysis can re-injure them or simply heighten their resistance.

In my own experience, the notorious hypersensitivity in these patients, while difficult to work with, is intimately connected to certain intuitive capacities for attunement and empathy with others and with the world we live in. Jerome Bernstein has called these sensitive individuals "borderlanders" and feels they have a special connection to "trans-rational reality" and to nature (see Bernstein, 2005: 109) The "spiritual" sensibilities of these individuals may strike more realist-oriented therapists as escapist or as a defensive use of grandiose fantasy. But in fact, many of these trauma-surviving patients have verifiable psychic abilities. They may be tuned into frequencies that most of us cannot see or hear. As William James made clear many years ago (see Chapter 1), people who are "broken" by trauma are also broken open to another dimension of reality. And sometimes their experiences in this dimension can have life-saving significance, as we have seen in earlier cases.

There are, of course, patients who use their special access to non-ordinary reality in the *service* of all those devious defensive avoidances and escapes that Steiner and others emphasize—"spiritual bypass" as Ken Wilbur (1998) calls it. But this is not always the case.

Like Fairbairn, Steiner reduces the inner world of psychic retreats to pathological derivatives of outer object-relations. This reduces the inner

world again to "nothing but" a repository of transposed outer realities. This excessively extraverted attitude marginalizes the inner world. Alternatively, if one starts from the standpoint I am recommending in this book, i.e., that we live in both a spiritual (inner) and material (outer) universe—"citizens of two realms" as Heschel says in our Introduction—then the idealized sanctuaries of what Steiner calls "pathological organizations" become interior spaces in which creative potentials and a vital spark of personality can find sanctuary and be preserved.

We need a psychology that does justice to the human soul, i.e., a *depth* psychology, and *ipso facto*, this involves the inner world. C.G. Jung reminds us that:

> the aim of the great religions is expressed in the injunction "not of this world," and this implies the inward movement of libido into the unconscious. Its withdrawal and introversion create in the unconscious a concentration of libido which is symbolized as the "treasure," as in the parables of the "pearl of great price" and the "treasure in the field."
>
> (Jung, 1921: para. 423, p. 250)

This treasure in the field is the human soul—that evanescent reality that Christian mystic Meister Eckhart claims bears the imprint of God (see Jung, 1921: para. 424, p. 250). And this mysterious reality has always been "located" in man's inner life.

Christopher Bollas and the inner world as ghostland

Christopher Bollas would seem to offer a promising psychoanalytic approach to the two-track material/spiritual metapsychology we are exploring in these pages. He speaks of our true-self potential as a "unique personal idiom"—distinct inherited possibilities of personality, specific to each individual—but dependent on a facilitating or non-facilitating world of objects through whom true-self potential is articulated or not (see Bollas, 1989: 8–12). When this nuclear core of unconscious life, seeking to manifest through experience, becomes the victim of abuse or traumatic violation, then transitional space breaks down and with it the child's elaboration of his/her personal idiom. The intermediate area of experience where reality and fantasy are co-mingled collapses; the true self stops evolving and retires into an alternative world where it lives on in phantasy while the false self negotiates reality. So far so good.

But when it comes to describing the "alternative world" into which the true self retires, Bollas, like Fairbairn and Steiner, describes a one-dimensional space that seems pathological and unhealthy. Bollas says that these schizoid patients "turn away from transitional objects in order to foster alternative objects" (Bollas, 1989: 118) (and an alternative world).

This alternative area differs, he says from ordinary inner space and the objects created there have a "special presence" to them. They are "the afterlife and personify the spirits of the dead" (Bollas, 1989: 118). Bollas proposes that

> we recognize this special inner area as bounded by a ghostline. When the subject passes an object representation across this inner line, he deliberately alters it and defines it as a unique inner presence. In particular he has a sense of creating something else out of the actual object world, of spiriting the essence of self and other states to this alternative world where former self and others live on like spirits or ghosts.
>
> (Bollas, 1989: 118–119)

In the same combative spirit as John Steiner, Bollas then trenchantly describes the plight of the analyst in the work with such ghost-ridden patients:

> As the analyst analyses this process, however, he finds himself in the midst of an intense other-worldly refusal by the patient, almost a haunting cry of rejection: "Don't you dare try to bring me back into life!"
>
> (Bollas, 1989: 138)

Like Steiner, Bollas' clinical descriptions are heavily infused with power dynamics. He claims that his very aliveness as a person is a continual irritant to these half-dead patients: "In each case, as the continuously living object, I became the focus of intense hate and revenge. I was withdrawn from. I was untalked to. I was to be existentially forced into a non-existence" (Bollas, 1989: 138). Slowly, according to his analysis, the patient is forced to re-engage the transitional space that was previously foreclosed:

> From intensive counter-cathexis of the analytic object (in the interest of energizing the ghost world), to increasingly aggressive encounter with the analyst: from anti-libidinal dis-incarnation of the life of the analyst to incrementally instinctual urges in the transference, this person re-discovers the transitional object through a begrudging use of the analyst who cannot be got rid of. His ability to survive, his presence and aliveness, resuscitate in the patient archaic experiences of the intermediate area of experiencing. This is not the alternate world. The analyst is not to be transformed into a double to live in the domain of alternate selves in the ghostland. The route to this person's object relating will then, emerge from aggression and encounter, through a form of "loving

hate" (Bollas, 1987) that permits him to come into the here and now of object relating.

(Bollas, 1989: 138)

Experienced clinicians will recognize the wrestling match that Bollas describes, although one wonders whether the analyst's simple recognition of and appreciation for the life-saving qualities of this inner world might not ameliorate some of the power-dynamics that ensue in Bollas' and Steiner's accounts.

Bollas, like Steiner, seems to say that the inner world, when pressed into service as a defensive retreat or alternative world for outer objects, becomes degraded in some way and houses only "ghosts," personifying the spirits of the dead.

Arnold Modell and the private self

Of the theorists we have surveyed so far, Arnold Modell (1993) comes the closest to acknowledging the primacy of the inner world and its "spiritual" reality. Modell takes as his departure point Winnicott's (1963a: 187) famous statement: "Each individual is an isolate, permanently non-communicating, permanently unknown, in fact unfound."

This, for Modell is the "private self" and in support of this notion, he reaches back to William James who described three distinct aspects of the self, the empirical bodily self, the social self, and finally the *spiritual self*, described as "the core of the self, a "palpitating inward life, a central nucleus" (James, 1890: 299, quoted in Modell, 1993: 33). Modell is interested in James' description of this innermost self as the fountainhead of personal morality, motivation, and creativity, and how it functions as a sustaining resource for a person facing social opprobrium. The private self is, Modell says, "the source of our deepest motivations and the source of our ultimate values. Our sense of well-being depends on the congruence between our actual self and the ideals to which we aspire" (Modell, 1993: 34).

At one point Modell compares the private self to the soul:

> Although the term "soul" and the Greek term "psyche" are interchangeable, the Platonic and early Christian idea of a soul refers to that part of the psyche that is private and communicates only with God. It seems to me that the idea of a soul, in this sense is not too different from the idea of a private self.
>
> (Modell, 1993: 62)

Modell suggests that the need to protect this inner core of the vulnerable self from intrusions is universal. He cites one of his own patients who "cocooned" herself into an alternative world in order to enhance contact with the private self that she, herself had lost touch with. This encased

authentic self of his patient was "waiting to be found" (Modell, 1993: 86) in her analysis. Creating an alternative inner environment in this way, says Modell, may be the only means of self preservation—a protection in certain intrusive families from "soul murder" (Modell, 1993: 76). Although this protection can lead to schizoid psycho-pathology, for Modell its function is not only defensive. Private space opens when one is disengaged, but it is more than simple non-relatedness. It represents a true alternative environment—another world—and its recognition in analysis by the analyst can have a healing effect.

Model wants to say that this other world is in part a creation of the private self, but partly not:

> For what is internalized does not correspond only to that which the individual has experienced. Children internalize more than their parents' "objective" behavior, values, and attitudes.... With the development of the child's capacity for symbolization and imaginary play, experience itself can be transformed.... The structure of the self thus contains affective memories of actual relationships, interspersed with fantasy.
>
> In addition to our parents, we also identify with idealized persons, who may be actual persons but who exist for us only in our imagination. We create ourselves by identifying with those persons that we wish to become. The possibilities here are endless. For many people this is a bootstrapping operation that lifts them out of the world into which they have been born. *There is evidently a wild card or joker in the pack of psychic development.*
>
> (Modell, 1993: 89–90; emphasis added)

This wild card or "joker in the pack" according to Modell is something that comes from within. It may be the vestige of that primal creativity and "beneficent omnipotence" that Winnicott said is the birthright of every healthy, well-mothered infant, but it results in an inward faith in oneself and passionate interests in ideas, ideals, and values—in something beyond the self that makes life worth living. In this way the private self might be said to generate private space through its passionate interests and this, says Modell, is a form of loving (Modell, 1993: 130).

Here, Modell takes us back to Hillman's idea (see Introduction) that we're all in search of an "adequate biography" which, if it is to do justice to our whole experience of living, must contain not only the influences pushing us from the past, but something deeper or *beyond* the ego that "calls" us into the future.

Modell quotes Abraham Maslow in support of this idea:

> Self-actualizing people are, without one single exception, involved in a cause outside their own skin, in something outside of

> themselves. They are devoted, working at something, something which is very precious to them—some calling or vocation in the old sense, the priestly sense. They are working at something which fate has called them to somehow and which they work at and which they love.
>
> (Maslow, 1972: 42, quoted in Modell, 1993: 92)

One of Modell's seminal ideas is that private space contains others who are not necessarily internalized objects, but may be important imaginal "presences." One such presence, he suggests, is the "muse." Even though Modell traces this inner presence back to Winnicott's capacity to be alone in the presence of the mother, this capacity later generalizes to become a major imaginal presence supporting the self in private space. The muse provides an inner object that supports the private self, even in solitude—and in solitude, says Modell, we open to an ineffable, even religious dimension of experience that can replenish us. Modell notes that the psychoanalytic literature regarding solitude is nearly nonexistent (see Modell, 1993: 122–3).

Citing James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* for support, Modell includes religious presences among muse-like inner beings and, along with James, suggests they be considered unconscious creations or emanations from the "many interpenetrating spheres of reality" (Modell, 1993: 132–3) that make up the varieties of human experience—including a "mythic" level to which the creative person surrenders as if surrendering to a god or goddess. We have seen several examples of such "muse-like" religious presences in Chapter I and in the figure of "Sympathy" in Mike's dreams (Chapter 4).

Modell cannot help but become rather mystical when he discusses the private self, its muse, and the importance of solitude for replenishing the soul. He stays in one world while flirting with another, and in this sense comes close to the binocular spiritual/material view of our subject that we are taking in the present volume. He acknowledges a mytho-poetic aspect of the inner world but does not develop this idea.

This cautionary reserve about all matters "mythic" or "spiritual" cannot be attributed to our next theorist, who jumps into both worlds, so to speak, with both feet.

Neville Symington and the true vs. false God

I was unaware of Symington's writings until after my previous book was published in 1996, and then I read in succession his small book *Narcissism, a New Theory* (1993), followed by *Emotion and Spirit* (1994), then *The Spirit of Sanity* (2001), and finally *A Pattern of Madness* (2002). In all these works, Symington describes a pathological, authoritarian survival "system" very similar to what I called the self-care system as it characterizes the inner

world of trauma. Symington did not start out attributing this system to the aftermath of trauma, but in his later writing he acknowledges its prevalence in the post-traumatic personality (Symington, 2001: 106).

His descriptions of this "pattern of madness" or "narcissistic constellation"—which he believes is a universal system—its tyrannical, even sadistic nature, the way it possesses the patient's ego like a vicious god-like entity, the way it functions as resistance to any change or new life, even the way it tries unsuccessfully to protect a core of the self inside from further violation (Symington, 2001: 60)—all this directly parallels my own discoveries in 1996, albeit in his own idiosyncratic language.

It is almost as if Neville Symington and myself were each, unbeknownst to the other, groping our way around the proverbial elephant in the dark—him speaking the language of British object-relations with a smattering of Jung, me speaking the language of Jungian theory with a smattering of British object-relations—yet with the result that our respective descriptions are both unmistakably of the same large, rough-skinned animal with four legs, a trunk, two tusks, a tail, and two large ears.

To have one's own clinical and theoretical insights so affirmed by a colleague in another country is a pleasure worth mentioning. To then discover—as I began to formulate my ideas for the current book *Trauma and the Soul*— that this same writer has framed his clinical argument in a language consistent with "spiritual discourse," is a pleasure almost beyond description. This latter remains true despite the disagreements I have with Symington on the nature of religious *experience* (see Comments; this section). He tends to minimize positive experiences of the numinous, and he says very little about the mytho-poetic inner world that supports the "child" inside that system that he calls the narcissistic constellation or a "pattern of madness."

Symington is not afraid to say that his work proceeds from a psycho-spiritual philosophical *ontology*, proposing a generative center to the personality he calls the "absolute" or the "infinite." In the tradition of Bion's work, he suggests that the absolute or infinite is the "ground in which we are all inserted" (Symington, 2001: 121). Symington's metapsychology differs from the classical theory that we are driven by impersonal forces (instincts) from within and/or determined by traumatic circumstances from without. "You don't get a human psychology," he says, "until you get a response [to those factors]" (Symington, 2001: 35) and this means actualizing the intentional core of the self in creative acts of freedom, love, and choice (Symington, 2001: 35).

In his early book on narcissism, Symington's name for the infinite or absolute inner center was the *life-giver* (Symington, 1993: 35). He has since substituted *the absolute* or *the infinite* for the term *life-giver*, but its role in his thought remains the same. The *life-giver* is a mystical inner reality that only comes into being when we choose it, and the intentional core of the self is able to repudiate this essential nature and turn against it. Symington says

that the different parts within us only begin to cohere if the life-giver (absolute or infinite) is opted for (Symington, 1993: 36). It is, he says, impossible to be the source of creative action without this choice.

Turning away from the infinite in ourselves forms the core of psychopathology, and Symington follows this aspect of choice all the way back into infancy. When the neglected or traumatized infant turns away from the mother and turns in upon itself, it is choosing the pathological system (narcissistic configuration in his language; self-care system in mine) instead of risking further hurt or rejection. Symington wants to say that trauma is not just what happens to us but our *response* to what happens to us, and in this response we make choices for or against our own spiritual center of being.

Symington does not use the word "soul" to describe the absolute or infinite center, as I do, nor does he suggest, as I have in this book, that this center of aliveness appears in dreams in symbolic form. But he does use words like the personal "spirit," which can be broken in trauma (Symington, 2001: 107), or the "spirit of life," (Symington, 2001: 108), or the "intentional core of the self" (Symington, 1993: 39), or that faculty that initiates "inner acts of generosity" (Symington, 2001: 7) and creative emotional relationship (Symington, 2001: 64) or that unifies the different parts of the self that are fragmented in trauma, thereby offering a "oneness to one's existence ... a wholeness ... or a unity" (Symington, 2001: 10, 93). He also speaks of the "true god" in the personality that "is the product of an inner creative act" (Symington, 2001: 162) and he contrasts this with the "false god" of narcissistic pathology. Even dreams, because they are essentially creative and synthetic (Symington, 2001: 53) have their origin in "the infinite" (Symington, 2001: 54). He also points to the great paradox that the absolute, the infinite, is also experienced as personal (Symington, 2002: 36).

One of Symington's unique contributions is to suggest that our access to this core of selfhood is through *conscience*, the "still small voice" inside us which we feel to be us, yet not us. Conscience, he says "is the subjective experience of the infinite within the personality" (Symington, 2001: 29). Conscience never condemns, as in a guilty conscience, but rather "invites." When conscience is repudiated it amounts to a repudiation of the infinite that we all share ... something that is basic to our nature (Symington, 2001: 31). Conscience has a synthetic function within the personality. It brings the elements inside a person into a whole so that acts of conscience strengthen the ego. When some part is condemned it is split-off, leading to fragmentation.

Another of Symington's creative contributions is to suggest that in today's world, the infinite, the absolute, is encountered in and through creative interaction with another person (Symington, 2001: 85). He feels that this amounts to a new form of spirituality today (Symington, 2001: 39) and highlights the importance of the transference interpretation in

psychoanalysis (Symington, 2001: 14). In the clinical cases reported in Chapter 2, I have tried to suggest the same thing, i.e., "moments" where the infinite or absolute intersects the interpersonal relationship between myself and a patient (see the case of Mike in Chapter 4 and Deborah in Chapter 9).

Our access to the life-giver, the infinite, or the absolute is for Symington not what will save us. It is rather through the creative act or the freedom of choice that we bring this divine reality into being—actualizing it within the personal sphere. The intentional core of the self can just as easily—perhaps more easily—repudiate the infinite in our nature, and here we have madness, psychosis, narcissistic pathology. All madness, for Symington, begins as *a refusal of life*: "The narcissistic constellation is a refusal of the infinite in our being ... refusal of that basic element out of which we are all constituted, produces madness" (Symington, 2001: 42).

Symington's suggestion that madness is a "constellation," or a "pattern" directly parallels my own concept of the self-care *system* as a defense against trauma. Whereas I speak of a dyadic personified system made up of a progressed self with its protector/persecutor on the one hand, and a regressed self with its wounded good or bad child on the other, Symington images a circle with its circumference hardened into a "crust" (tyrannical rigidity) and its center made of "jelly" (weakness and lack of a creative center). The crust is further hardened by what he calls "intensifiers" and the gelatinous middle is further dissolved by what he calls "liquifiers," both of these forces representing the envy, greed, jealousy, and omnipotence that is part and parcel of narcissistic pathology (see Symington, 2001: 47; 2002).

The omnipotence enshrined in Symington's system is further elaborated into various bipolar relational dynamics found in people whose lives have been taken over by the "system." For example, such individuals have an inferiority/superiority complex that Symington describes as a "God–worm" axis and he offers a diagram of this structure (Symington, 2002). They tend to become symbiotically attached (like "glue") or alternatively paranoid in their relationships, resulting in another bipolar axis ("glue/paranoia"). Symington's system carries many implications for clinical practice and these are engagingly detailed in his various publications, especially *The Spirit of Sanity* (2001) and *A Pattern of Madness* (2002).

For Symington, the system of madness is a kind of monster (like "Dis" in Chapter 3) that functions in the personality with a perverse "intention" to thwart our striving toward the infinite—our striving to let the infinite or absolute permeate our nature. Once in place, it takes on a life of its own and the function of the whole system is to detach a person from the basic element in his/her being, which is the infinite:

> This same duality is within the human being. We are the absolute. The other is in us, and the person is a creative centre; then there

> is another side, which I put down as self-centred narcissism, psychosis, autism. It may be a little too simplistic, yet I think nearly all psychiatric conditions can be simplified down to something much more elemental. Think of them either as processes or a pattern that interferes with the capacity of the person to have understanding and freedom.
>
> (Symington, 2001: 13)

The sanity–madness duality in Symington's thought becomes a contest between two archetypal antinomies—two trans-personal "powers" he calls the "true god" and the "false god." The true god promotes personal growth and creativity and represents the infinite or absolute in our nature; the false god, representing the pattern of madness, strangles this same growth and creativity:

> There is a god that gets in the way of two people coming to know each other. There is a god who interferes with my thinking; there is a god who demands that I follow his instructions; there is a god who punishes me if I think for myself; there is a god who sanctions my sadism, a god who encourages my masochism, a god who fosters my greed, who fosters my envy, who fosters my jealousy, a god who possesses me but despises me, a god who solves problems by obliterating them.
>
> (Symington, 2001: 153)

This god, Symington makes clear, exists in all of us who have a narcissistic structure within us, and this structure *comes into being because of trauma* "I came to notice," says Symington, "that people who had undergone the very worst traumas were the people in whom this whole system was most firmly ensconced" (Symington, 2001: 106). "In the narcissistic part of the personality a wound has been incurred, and the god arises, having sustained an infinite insult, and takes over the personality. The rest of the personality is utterly crushed by the overpowering god" (Symington, 2001: 158).

In contrast to the false god, Symington's true god represents the infinite or absolute in the personality. This god, says Symington, "is grasped through a supreme effort of thought—a god who is a triumph of the thinking process.... The true god is reached through a deep and sustained reflection on the nature of reality" (Symington, 2001: 159).

Symington calls this reflective contemplation an "act of understanding" (Symington, 2001: 39). He traces this kind of sustained reflection back to the seers who wrote the Upanishads or the mystics of all great religious traditions—those men and women who realized the absoluteness of Being on the one hand, and that we are all a part of it, on the other. This, Symington feels, is the great legacy of the Judeo-Christian tradition—that the divine is also *personal*, a paradox, a perennial mystery:

> The realization of the true god in the personality is the product of an inner creative act. This is in dire contrast to the presence of the false god, which is through an act of submission in which the individual psyche is crushed. The realization of the true god lays a foundation in the personality of respect for the Self. I have spelt "Self" here with a capital letter because it is the THAT. I am IT. THAThood is my nature, it is my being—the THAT demands respect. The THAT in me is the THAT in you and demands respect.
> (Symington, 2001: 162)

Comment

Neville Symington clearly sees the spiritual life as a battle between archaic structures within the human soul—between that which is life-giving and infinite (true god) and that which conspires against life and human freedom (false god). There is no paucity of vivid examples to show how the false god is experienced by those unfortunate individuals in whose psyche's "He" has set up residence. And yet, when it comes to the positive side of the equation, i.e., to describing how the absolute or infinite is experienced or how the true god is grasped, Symington wants to say it is by a "supreme effort of thought ... a god who is a triumph of the thinking process" (Symington, 2001: 159).

This emphasis upon human *reason* is consistent with Symington's emphasis on the human construction of truth through creative "acts of understanding," choices, or judgments. For example, in his book on psychoanalysis and religion, he says: "The position taken in this book is that a religion that is relevant to our lives in the social structures that are dominant in the modern world is one of human construction through the assistance of reason" (Symington, 1994: 77).

Accordingly, Symington is highly suspicious of direct experiences of the divine such as the ecstasies of the prophets or of what Rudolph Otto (and later Jung) called the *numinosum*. He fears this leads to possible acts of submission and capitulation to an authoritarian "force." While this concern is certainly warranted, it leads to a serious misunderstanding of Jung's emphasis upon mankind's original (primitive) religious *experience*, as centered in the *numinosum*. Symington thinks Jung applauds this "primitive" form of religion and promotes it, leading to possible dangers of submission to greater powers that might turn destructive.

Symington is not wrong in pointing to Jung's lifelong fascination with the *daimonic* higher and lower powers of the unconscious. In many of his published writings Jung emphasizes the "otherness" and ego-dissolving effect of true religious experience and often supports his ideas with the accounts of primal peoples, shamans, or converts who, like the many individual accounts in William James' (1936) *Varieties of Religious Experience*, do indeed report states of ecstasy, moments of "possession" by a god or

spiritual entity, visionary trances, etc. Certainly this was Jung's subjective experience as recorded in the *Red Book* (2009).

But what Symington appears not to understand is that Jung was also keen to show how initial "primitive" forms of immediate religious experience must be transformed by conscious men and women into a more symbolic understanding—and that this happens through an inner dialogue with the angelic or demonic powers. The result is that these benign or malevolent powers are slowly transformed. They are "tamed" as God was reportedly "tamed" in the lap of the virgin. To use language from our introduction, they "empty themselves" or "grow down" while the ego's powers are slowly enhanced and "grow up." Ultimately, the powers then become an inner resource—what Jeremiah calls the "still small voice" whispering from within. This is very much like Symington's conscience as the subjective experience of the infinite or absolute ... an idea which Jung embraced.

In *Answer to Job*, a book that Symington reportedly admires, Jung gives an example of "standing one's ground" in relation to the "primitive" aspects of the Godhead. If we were to use Symington's language, Jung suggests that Job steadfastly refuses to collapse into the "victim/persecutor" psychology recommended by his comforters and described by Symington as the "narcissistic constellation." Job's stalwartness brings about the humanization of the Godhead and insight into what Symington would call the "tragic position" beyond blame or hopelessness. Jung suggests that Job offers us a model for how to stand up to the tyrannical aspect of God (Dis in Chapter 3) and that if we do this, there follows an "incarnation" of God in the human heart—the emergence of Christ-consciousness within. Symington has apparently missed this emphasis of Jung's thought.

In Chapters 1, 2, and 4 I have described several moments in which the positive side of the *numinosum* broke through to individuals—either as very moving visionary experiences or in "moments of meeting" in the therapy dialogue where an underlying spiritual reality came into view through strong affect, or a dream and the apparent re-acceptance of an inner child part of the personality that had been exiled somewhere and now returned with a new sense of aliveness.

These experiences were healing, partly because they restored a mythopoetic matrix—a larger, archetypal story within which these patients' personal stories could find a place. The patients felt witnessed or companioned from within and thereby found hope. Symington's mythopoetic understanding extends mostly to the dark side of the self-care system, i.e., to the imaginative personified beings present in his narcissistic constellation. His otherwise rich imaginative elaboration of "a pattern of madness" does not extend to the realm of the "true god," i.e., the absolute or the infinite, which is described in philosophical, rational, and humanistic terms only, for example as "freedom, contemplation, conscience, acts of understanding," etc. Despite the admirable existential challenge in Symington's prescription, for example to *choose* the life-giver over the pull

of the pathological system, there are other cases where a patient feels *chosen* by the life-giver. For such a patient, this comes as a vivid, embodied mystical *experience*, not a rational act of contemplation.

For example, in the case of Jennifer, described in Chapter 1, such an experience gave her something to live for—something beyond survival. It is true that despite the presence of her "angel" she *did* have an equally powerful "devil" rampaging and controlling her from within. But without her angel, and without its eventual projection onto me in the transference (an idealization I was bound to disappoint) she would have lost hope and lost the motivation she found to continue her life.

Symington is equally suspicious of idealization in the clinical situation, seeing it as a form of that submission required by the "monster" tyrant in the narcissistic system. In this suspicion he joins the Kleinians, all of whom fail to see that idealization is anything more than a defense. On the contrary, in my experience, idealization is one of the ways that trans-personal realities find their place in the inter-human world (through projection), thus creating that mytho-poetic matrix that may support the soul in being until it is ready to suffer a "descent" into the body.

In contemporary psychoanalytic theory it was Heinz Kohut who acknowledged the importance of the patient's primitive idealizations as the first step in humanizing the "grandiose self" and omnipotent parental imagos (Kohut, 1971: 25) through what he described as a process of "transmuting internalization" or "phase-appropriate disillusionment" (Kohut, 1971: 45, 107–8). Contemporary Jungian analysts understand that when highly idealized energies come into the transference situation, they are not simply the residue of infantile grandiosity or omnipotence, but are derived in part from the mytho-poetic dynamism of the archetypal psyche—its tendency to amplify personal relationships into their mythic forerunners. They may represent the projection of a trans-personal center in the personality that is universally a part of religion—what Jung called the central archetype or the Self. Edward Edinger has been especially eloquent about the daunting responsibility incumbent upon the analyst when a highly idealized trans-personal content from the archaic layers of the psyche enters the transference (Edinger, 1972: 59).

So, Neville Symington offers us a compelling mytho-poetic map—especially for the pathological (diabolizing) or narcissistic side of the inner world, as impacted by trauma. His mytho-poesis, however, does not extend to the positive side of the inner world, which he wants to reserve for a more humanistic, rational project.

James Grotstein and the ineffable subject of the unconscious

James Grotstein is significant in our discussion because, like Jung, he has truly grasped the mytho-poetic mystery and wisdom in the unconscious

psyche as evidenced in dreams. Through many well known—and recently more radical—writings he has undertaken the monumental task of interpreting the mytho-poetic "presences" in the unconscious through the lens of object-relations theory, especially Melanie Klein's notions of early infantile phantasy. Majorly influenced by Bion's spiritual emphasis on "O"—ultimate reality, the absolute, the infinite, or the godhead—he has recently undertaken a major revisioning of Freud's theory of the unconscious. This is set forth in his monumental *Who is the Dreamer who Dreams the Dream?* (Grotstein, 2000). In many ways his *project* in this book involves the same concerns that led Jung to break with Freud 100 years ago.

I have known and appreciated James Grotstein's work for many years and summarized his findings in my earlier book regarding the primitive superego and its spell-casting destructive effect in the lives of traumatized patients—findings that directly paralleled my discovery of the self-care system. In what follows, I focus on those more mystical and spiritual conclusions that he derives from his later clinical experience and interpretive efforts.

As he tells the story, Grotstein was in medical school, and in analysis with Bion, when he had a major dream which served as a kind of spiritual awakening. The dream was set against the fog-shrouded moorland of the Scottish Highlands that he loved. An angel appeared in the dream and asked "Where is James Grotstein?" whereupon another angel answered "He is aloft, contemplating the dosage of sorrow upon the Earth" (Grotstein, 2000: 5).

Upon awakening, Grotstein was overcome by the beauty, poetry, and mystery of the dream's presentation. He had *experienced* the dream, but he wanted to know who *wrote* it. He wanted desperately to be introduced to the creative writer who wrote those lines and he realized it could not have been himself—because he was asleep at the time! (see Grotstein, 2000: 5).

Most of Grotstein's mystical writing in *Who's the Dreamer* can be understood as his effort to realize, within a revised psychoanalytic understanding, that long-anticipated introduction to the mysterious writer of his dream, and of all dreams. He realizes that this writer is a preternatural (beyond natural) self, an *ineffable subject of the unconscious*, and these words give expression to Grotstein's conviction that the architecture of the psyche, available through dreams, is *sacred*, and encompasses both "the human and more-than-human capacity we have in our innermost souls to harness infinity, complexity, and chaos and render them meaningful along the variegated dimensions of understanding within the human wave band" (Grotstein, 2000: xxiii).

It is impossible to summarize James Grotstein's theory, which is an effort to integrate the theories of Freud, Klein, Bion, his own clinical experience, and the "mysteries" he has experienced in his own dreams and those of his patients—all this with a creative and encyclopedic mind that ranges over the whole of human history, making connections

everywhere! In the following I will focus on three areas of his contributions that lend support to the ideas I am trying to set forth in these pages: (1) dreams as a royal road to a numinous or ineffable layer of the unconscious and its mytho-poetic "presences"; (2) the idea of a lost child-like innocence in the personality and its relationship to the spiritual dimension of an individual's religious life; and (3) internal objects that result in oppressive internal "systems" or what Grotstein, following Steiner and Symington, describes as pathological organizations—notions that both parallel and differ somewhat from my concept of the self-care system.

The mystery of dreams and their mytho-poetic language

For Grotstein, dreams occupy a middle place "between the worlds." "The dream is a vent," he says, "in the shield that separates our two worlds, the outer world of conscious, asymmetrical experience and the inner world of infinite symmetry and inner cosmic vastness" (Grotstein, 2000: 32). His acknowledgment of the ontological reality of these two worlds and the "space" or "gap" between them puts his work squarely astride the binocular metapsychology of the present investigation.

Like Bion before him, Grotstein is dissatisfied with Freud's view of the unconscious mind as a "seething cauldron." He remains convinced that the "writer" of his dream occupies (lives in) a very different unconscious:

> I am searching, in short, for the "Stranger within thee"—and within me—a more vitalistic, animistic, and phenomenological way to address the rich complexity of the mind, one that respects the mind's numinousness, mystery, and infinite possibilities.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: xvi)

Grotstein is second only to Jung in privileging the dream as the *via regia* to the inner world. The apparent wisdom and uncanny intelligence that Jung finally vested in the Self as center and circumference of the whole psyche and as the ultimate "dream-maker," Grotstein vests in what he calls the "*ineffable subject of the unconscious.*" This wise and mysterious "preternatural presence" is, for Grotstein, equivalent to the indwelling God of the mystics, the Demiurge of the Gnostic, or the Muses of classical Greece (Grotstein, 2000: 4). Experiencing its numinous presence is "perhaps as close to the God experience as mankind can ever hope to achieve" (Grotstein, 2000: xvii).

The *ineffable subject of the unconscious* takes the raw material (beta bits) of psychical life, i.e., "the chaotic, fragmented accretions of mental pain left over as residues of yet one more day of existence" (Grotstein, 2000: 10) and communicates them symbolically through the dream narration (alpha function) to the *phenomenal subject of the unconscious* (the dreamer who understands the dream), who serves as the internal "audience." This

audience receives and processes the results of the dream work, bearing witness to the truth of the dream experience.

Working in concert, the dreamer who dreams the dream and the dreamer who understands it (the ineffable and phenomenal subjects) together create symbolic meaning. The ineffable subject shapes the dream content in the language of poetry, narrative, and drama so that it resonates with a latent story in the phenomenal subject (audience). When these two halves come together in the warp and woof of the dream experience, meaning is created. Each side represents its own "world." Whereas the ineffable subject is numinous, the phenomenal subject is secular, manifest, incarnate, palpable (Grotstein, 2000: 141).

Grotstein sees an intimate connection between the emotional pain we have been unable to fully process (trauma) and the "intention" of the mytho-poetic dream process. Dreams help us to differentiate and process the components of our experience, rendering them into symbolic meaning. The ineffable subject seeks to dramatize the emotional pain we do not yet feel while the phenomenal subject feels the pain of object-encounter and relays it back to the ineffable subject who re-works it and re-transmits it back to the ego (see Grotstein, 2000: 128).

Thus the ineffable subject of the unconscious is continually creating mytho-poetic reflections of itself—dreams—out of the raw, undifferentiated proto-experiences of what Bion calls "O," and rendering them, in concert with the phenomenal subject (the dreamer who understands the dream), into "stories" that communicate meaning (Grotstein, 2000: 9). These individual dream stories may connect to what Jung called a "big dream" or to what we have described (Introduction) as the One Great Story behind individual personal stories:

> Dreams are like archipelagos. Each dream may be unique and specific in its own right, but under the surface we may glimpse the presence of a continuum, the dream of dreams, which is the mythic fingerprint, the unconscious life theme, the theme of themes, for the dreaming subject.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: 7)

In a beautiful statement about dreams that Jung himself could have written, Grotstein summarizes:

> The dream is the epiphany of divine conversations between the ineffable subject and the phenomenal subject and constitutes a reading of our existence while we are in transit between our once and future being.... Narrative gathers the outcries of all corners of the psyche and lures them to be dreamed so that their story may be told.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: 36)

Dreams, for Grotstein, become one of the ways in which the ineffable subject and the phenomenal subject weave a dream-narrative that is both intimately *personal* and yet also *impersonal* and universal. Grotstein suggests that the personal dimension of this process often has to do with a *hostaged self* that has been lost because of traumatic circumstances:

> There is a dream audience who anticipates the dream and requisitions it from the dream producer in order to recognize its own problems and resonate with its own hostaged self—a self experienced as having become lost, like Sleeping Beauty waiting to be awakened by the Prince Charming dream.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: 11)

This "hostaged self" is discussed by Grotstein in many different contexts. It sounds very much like the "child" we have witnessed in the clinical material presented thus far and, in fact, Grotstein discusses the inner child in several cases. Often he refers to this lost part of the self as our "soul" or our "innocence" which we have sold to the "devil." This analysis is an exact parallel with my own.

Grotstein presents the case of a patient with a severe trauma history who was stuck in his life and in his analysis for years complaining bitterly of his fate as a neglected and abandoned child, utterly unable to find any gratitude in his life for anything, including his analysis. While on vacation in France the patient visited the Cathedral de la Sacre Coeur and reported a religious experience there. Gazing upon the statue of Christ, who seemed to reach for him mercifully and forgivingly, the patient exclaimed, "I don't need psychoanalysis! I need God in order to regain my innocence!" (Grotstein, 2000: 222).

Grotstein was deeply affected by this and was especially shaken when his patient added "Why was I born? How could those selfish, ungrown-up people dare to have children?" (Grotstein, 2000: 228). This patient had frequently talked about a dead (innocent) child within himself and about his despair of this child ever coming to life again. The patient also felt internally haunted and dominated by a demonic internal force that caused him to be outwardly rude and contemptuous to others. Grotstein realized that the lost innocence and the "possession" by a demonic internal force went together in some sort of early Faustian bargain. Summarizing his findings, he suggests:

> the "dead child" is universally ensconced in abused and traumatized patients and is transformed into the "undead child," the one who relentlessly haunts them for their having made a Faustian bargain with an internal dark force in order to survive. They have "died a little" in order to be safe.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: 165)

> Thus human innocence is an imprisoned hostage within the substance of the god of the abject, the devil himself. In this very abjectness the devil paradoxically symbolizes [holds] *the most holy aspect of ourselves*, the innocent self that we sold into bondage and left in the embrace of the dark demon.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: 182)

Several of the clinical cases I have presented in the preceding chapters illustrate this idea of the innocent "hostaged self," i.e., the buried boy-child of Richard's dream in Chapter 2, the entombed child of Helen's dream in Chapter 3, and the blown-up feminine child in Mike's dream in Chapter 4. All these dream-children were lost to the patient's ongoing life until they were contacted again within the analytic process. All seemed to stand for an animated pre-traumatic innocent core of vitality. All returned in some form, and were re-animated. They came back to life and were a major part of these patients' healing and progress in therapy. The Faustian bargains these patients had ostensibly made unconsciously became apparent in their *resistance* to experiencing the vulnerable affects associated with their lost-child selves. In Chapter 3 we witnessed a dramatic example of this Faustian bargain as we followed Dante and his guide down into Limbo where the "innocent" patriarchs and "children" were encapsulated as a group of eternally "hostaged selves" living an "undead" life in Limbo, guarded by the fallen angel "Dis."

Grotstein points out that the idea of normal developmental *innocence* of the infant, as advocated by Winnicott and Fairbairn (and we would add Jung) is, without question, that aspect of our subjectivity that we have from time immemorial referred to as the human soul. The neglect of innocence and the soul in psychoanalytic theory, he suggests, is because of a bias in the latter toward our "original sin"—i.e., the psychic determinism of Freudian drive theory and Klein's sadistic unconscious phantasies deriving from the death instinct and projectively identified with the mother. He suggests a separate "developmental line" for innocence and postulates an epigenesis in our experience of it from the primal innocence of infancy through the Forest of Experience (Blake), moving on to "Higher Innocence" (Grotstein, 2000: 259). In the next chapter we will discuss the concept of innocence in light of St. Exupéry's *The Little Prince* (1971) and explore the question of how innocence is transformed by experience into mature ego agency.

Angelic and/or demonic internal presences and the self-care system

In his own unique idiom, Grotstein has found his way to what Jung meant by archetypal or *daimonic* inner objects as mytho-poetic personifications of both inner and outer realities. He calls these "rogue" objects or "preternatural presences":

> I have come to realize that what we have been calling internal objects are really "third forms," chimerical (hybrid) conglomerations of the image of the real object intermixed with the resulting products from splitting and projective identifications of aspects of the subject.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: xxi)

> I use the word preternatural to address the nonlinear complexity of our being alive and human—in the presence of the mystery inherent within others. It suggests exceptional qualities and capacities that we once attributed to gods, messiahs, and mystics.... The unconscious, particularly the ineffable subject (the id) is like a god, but a handicapped one because it needs partners in order for its mission to be completed.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: xxiii)

> In the psychoanalytic enterprise we psychoanalysts try to name the haunting presences that occupy the absence, and even presence, of the real object and hope that they may ultimately be transformed into benign and realistic presences or returned to their proper owners.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: xxiv)

Here Grotstein is describing a process of *humanizing* archetypal images and affects, which is an essential part of every successful psychotherapy. The spirituality inherent in Grotstein's notion of "preternatural presences" encompasses both the angelic and the demonic side of the unconscious. On the demonic side are those malevolent inner figures that are found so often in the unconscious material of traumatized individuals and that I described in my earlier book (Kalsched, 1996).

In his early writing, Grotstein was inclined to see these dark inner figures through the lens of Melanie Klein as the projected/introjected destructive or sadistic parts of self and/or the child's significant objects. In an earlier work he noted that once established in the inner world, they became "living phantoms" holding a more dependent part of the patient hostage and fought for their own destiny (Grotstein, 1981: 330). He has viewed them as highly pathological formations—primitive superego figures or "Rogue Subjective Objects" (Grotstein, 2000: 157) responsible for the negative therapeutic reaction.

In his more recent writings, he has amplified or "mythologized" these inner objects in a manner consistent with Jungian thought, honoring the mytho-poetic function of the psyche more directly. He says:

> In contrast to psychoanalysts of the various Freudian schools, Jung and his followers have been very interested in what I refer to as

> the *denizens* or preferably the *presences*, that occupy—or we may say haunt—the Unconscious.... The idea of the *archetypes* of the collective unconscious is close to the patient's inner subjective experience, and I emphasize the Kleinian and Bionian equivalent, *inherent preconceptions* and *unconscious phantasies of phantoms, monsters, or chimerae* produced by *projective identification.*
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: 169)

In addition, he sees clearly that the *denizens* may not always be negative, i.e., they may have a positive value in the overall economy of the psyche:

> When we as analysts observe the presence of an archaic superego and its harmful effect on the patient, we generally call attention to the patient's entranced fealty to that inner—or projected—demon. From another perspective, however, paradoxically this superego demon can be seen as a friend in disguise.
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: 184)

In the previous chapter we saw a dramatic example of how Mike's internal persecutor had both malevolent and benevolent aspects, and how it slowly transformed from "demon" into "angel" over the course of his six-year analysis. Beginning in his early dreams as the "evil" bomber who tried to destroy the human/divine inner child, it slowly transformed into the demonic caricature of the Nazi officer to whom he surrendered himself, and then, toward the end of his analysis, made a final appearance as the benevolent axe-man in Mike's death/rebirth initiation dream. To me, this transformation clearly demonstrates that the archaic defense is not just a pathological formation bent on destruction, but is primarily a protective system with a never-to-be violated core of personhood at its center.

Grotstein uses the myth of the labyrinth and the minotaur as an archetypal image of the imprisoning inner space of the schizoid or depressed patient—a new "labyrinthine personality type" he proposes (Grotstein, 2000: 192). The labyrinth and the minotaur inside it signify the persecutory demons of our own creation. They are created to protect us from the Real, of which we have become orphans. If we fail to confront them, they become our nemesis objects—sadistic superegos that negate our efforts to live and create: "The Minotaur is our persecutor; that is, we have created it through projective identification; it is ourselves. The true enemy lies beyond the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions; it is the Real, Ananke (Necessity), Bion's O" (Grotstein, 2000: 207).

In keeping with this notion, Grotstein recasts the hero myth in an interesting fashion. In Jungian theory, the hero sets out to conquer the minotaur, who represents the primitive unconscious and its undertow into undifferentiated oblivion. In Grotstein's reading of the myth, the hero fights his own defenses—the demons of his own creation. He is the man

who dares to know himself as he is in the "Mirror of the Real" without the defensive disguises into which his imagination has been warped. To do so, says Grotstein, the infant must forge ahead with great courage, transcending the illusions of felt curses, handicaps, bogeymen, and "monsters." He must distinguish his true fears (Reality of O) from the screening creations (archetypal defenses) that prevent him from living.

Turning now to the benevolent side of those "preternatural presences" or "denizens" that occupy the inner world, Grotstein chooses one in particular; namely the "background presence of primary identification." This inner figure, closely allied with the ineffable subject of the unconscious, supplies a sense of inner "backing up" or supporting one's journey through life. It is equivalent, he says, to a guardian angel—an inner divinity, immanent within the human imagination (Grotstein, 2000: 221). We saw an especially dramatic example of this in Jennifer's material in Chapter 1.

This "background presence" is the phantasied and mythical counterpart to the infant's experience of what Winnicott calls the "environmental mother" (1963b) as differentiated from the object mother. It is experienced as a religious, spiritual or divine essence—our "organizing messianic genius" (Winnicott, 1963b: 18)—a principle of continuity which in religious terms can be called the God within or the "hovering spirit of Oneness that binds all existence (Taoism)" (Winnicott, 1963b: 19). Also identified as the ineffable subject of being and agency, this "presence," Grotstein concludes, must be none other than the very "second self" or "alter ego" that wrote the drama of his early dream with its colloquy of angels and its mysterious, yet profound meaning.

It is of interest that, according to Grotstein, this "background presence of primary identification" also has a special relationship to the innocent "child" in the psyche. Grotstein discovered this in his clinical work with the previously mentioned patient who had a religious experience at the cathedral in France and whose agonizing cry "I didn't ask to be born" so moved him. Building on Bion's concept of the container/contained, Grotstein realized in this case that he was being asked to take on and carry the unbearable pain of the patient as a kind of "Pieta" or "Madonna of Sorrows," to the patient's crucified and bleeding innocent "child" (Christ). He called this the "Pieta Covenant" (Grotstein, 2000: 231ff.) and this formulation led him to an awareness that trans-personal currents flow through the otherwise pedestrian struggles of analyst and patient in the psychoanalytic adventure. He called this "position" or new awareness the "transcendent position" (Grotstein, 2000: 272) and compared it to the inner journey into oneself described by the Gnostics:

> what I am suggesting is that we have an inherent need to relate to the domain of holiness within ourselves and that in this pursuit of the sacred each of us recapitulates his own pilgrimage from the

pettiness, selfishness, unfairness, and cruelty of the paranoid-schizoid position, through the sorrow, mercy, pity, mourning, and repentance of the depressive position—and with it the suspension of "ego." Thus may we enter the transcendent position of mystical at-one-ment with O.

(Grotstein, 2000: 276)

Grotstein's reflections in his rich book sprang from the outcry of a patient who experienced himself as God-deprived. In the course of his analytic work with this patient and others like him, he had to rethink the role of conventionally "spiritual" ideas and longings as they often appeared in the psychoanalytic adventure. He asks:

> Are not the protests of traumatized, abused, or molested children and their adult survivor counterparts a plaintive plea to regain their lost *innocence*? Is not the mechanism of *idealization* but a way to find an object that is worthy of being worshipped? Is not the ego ideal deeply reminiscent of our putatively *sanctified self*? ... Do we not need an object of worship—and to personify as well as to mystify—in order to mediate the infinities and chaos of our unconscious mental life as well as of external reality and to represent *coherence, balance, harmony,* and *serenity* in the form of a unified cosmogonic explanation?
>
> (Grotstein, 2000: 270)

7

INNOCENCE, ITS LOSS, AND RECOVERY

Reflections on St. Exupéry's *The Little Prince*

> Innocence is the crucial element in a person's spiritual nature.
> (James Grotstein, 1984: 213)

> True suffering belongs to innocence, not guilt.
> (Helen Luke, 1995: 60)

Innocence and how psychoanalysts view it

The subject of this chapter is that elusive essence at the very core of our sense of aliveness—something we call "innocence" and that we associate with the guileless simplicity and wide-eyed trust of young children, or the equally compelling beauty and presence of those special animals in our lives that we call "pets." Whether child or animal, *innocence* implies a virginal state connoting something pure, original, and uncontaminated by the "grown up" or civilized world of adult experience—something close to the soul, and to one's spiritual inheritance as James Grotstein suggests in the epigraph above.

Psychoanalysis has not been friendly to the idea of an inherent innocence in the personality, before or after trauma. The child in Freud's vision was "polymorphously perverse"—a bundle of instincts striving for release and discharge. The same could be said for Melanie Klein (1940) and her followers, who adhered to the concept that the infant came into life with unconscious destructive phantasies deriving from the death instinct, which were projected into the mother and then feared as rebounding persecution and attack. For Klein one did not start with innocence but with guilt—a kind of psychoanalytic *original sin*—and worked toward the possibility of goodness and gratitude while moving from the paranoid persecutory to the depressive position.

However, many other analysts who both preceded and followed Klein did not share this view and recent developments in attachment theory, infant observation, relational theory, and the self-psychology initiated by Heinz Kohut (1971, 1977) in America all support a more sympathetic view of primal innocence in the child's infancy. Members of the British Object

Relations school, such as Winnicott, Guntrip, and Fairbairn, clearly imply an initial condition of childhood innocence which can then be violated or corrupted by environmental failure. Through this theoretical lens the innocent infant is hostage to a mother who is either "good enough" or not. Winnicott's (1963b) idea of the "being infant," and his notion of the "true self" (1960) both support the idea of a pristine beginning before the infant enters the "forest of experience."

Finally, as noted in the previous chapter, James Grotstein makes a sympathetic—even eloquent—case for primal childhood innocence and its "hostaged self." "Innocence," he says, "signifies the child's sense of being blessed and protected by its objects and thus anticipating safety in its life and wanderings. It suggests guilelessness of anticipation of experience" (Grotstein, 2000: 260). Whereas loss of innocence occurs with:

> The collapse of its faith and trust in its objects when they either critically disappoint, neglect, or abuse the infant or when random circumstances traumatically cause the infant to believe that the world is unsafe. These infants then become "orphans of the Real."
> (Grotstein, 2000: 261)

Innocence in the Western literature

In all of Western literature, the relationship between the innocence of childhood and one's essential spiritual nature was perhaps best celebrated by two visionary English poets, William Blake (1757–1827) and William Wordsworth (1770–1850), both of whom regarded our early years as wondrous and close to the mystery of God.

In 1789, Blake published his illustrated *Songs of Innocence*, which offered a radiant image of childhood as that time in our lives when we live in the immediacy of the moment—here and now—in joy and innocence, and in natural kinship with the world around us. The book opens with the well-known lines:

> Piping down the valleys wild,
> Piping songs of pleasant glee,
> On a cloud I saw a child,
> And he laughing said to me;
> "Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
> So I piped with merry cheer.
> "Piper, pipe that song again;"
> So I piped, he wept to hear.
> (Blake, 1971: 34)

In another poem in the same volume, "The Little Boy Found," we witness the tender relationship between the innocent vulnerable child and a protective, fatherly God:

The little boy lost in the lonely fen,
Led by the wand'ring light
Began to cry; but God, ever nigh,
Appear'd like his father, in white.
He kissed the child, & by the hand led,
And to his mother brought,
Who in sorrow pale, thro' the lonely dale,
Her little boy weeping sought.
(Blake, 1971: 50)

Like Blake, William Wordsworth proposed that during the innocent years of childhood we are close to the divine—an intimacy we are bound to lose. His classical statement of this idea is found in his great "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood":

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
(Wordsworth, 2004a: 159)

Wordsworth goes on to show how, inevitably, we lose this initial intimacy with the divine as the adult world closes in:

Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?
(Wordsworth, 2004a: 159)

Alas it "dies away" and "fades into the light of common day" (Wordsworth, 2004a: 159).

So the "Soul" that rises with us as our "life's Star," is lost in the mist of memory, and yet, something of it is retained in our longing. We are, in Wordsworth's terms, forever "haunted ... by those first affections, those shadowy recollections" (Wordsworth, 2004a: 162) of the "eternal mind" (Wordsworth, 2004a: 161). Immortality "broods over us" like a "Master o'er a Slave" (Wordsworth, 2004a: 161) until we return—through our grief—to that innocence at a higher level of understanding:

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.
(Wordsworth, 2004a: 163)

so that
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
...
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fear,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.
(Wordsworth, 2004a: 163)

In both Wordsworth's famous "Ode" and in Blake's later—and darker—view of innocence, set forth in the companion volume *Songs of Experience* (1984), an evolutionary view of innocence is proposed. According to both writers, we start off in a kind of primal identification with a benevolent God in another world (child on a cloud) and slowly, through a suffering descent into the forest of experience, we lose that original vision. "Shades of the prison-house close upon the growing boy," and we meet the cruelty of this world, the frightful "Tyger Tyger, burning bright, in the forests of the night" (Blake, 1984: 34) and struggle to understand how "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" (Blake, 1984: 35), i.e., how can we reconcile the radiant joy and unguarded openness of early childhood life with the inevitable cruelty and trauma that follows. Do we admit (with Freud) that the "visionary gleam, the glory and the dream" were just illusions? Or is it possible to recover some of that original innocence as a later, more mature, or higher form of innocence? Both poets believe the latter, i.e., that we can indeed recover some of that original state. So did Jung. Likewise those psychoanalysts whose theories we are privileging in these pages.

St. Exupéry's *The Little Prince*

In Antoine de St. Exupéry's story *The Little Prince* (2000) we have another evolutionary view of innocence and its transformation. In the story, a little prince lives alone on his tiny planet—an asteroid known as B-612—lovingly

tending his single rose, and appreciating the many sunsets he can view by moving his chair around his tiny world as it turns. Soon, however, he must make a painful journey through the forest of experience to "this world" in search of a sheep to help control the terrible beobab trees that grow like weeds on his planet. In the process, he meets a stranded airplane pilot, who has crashed his plane in the Sahara desert. This meeting and ensuing relationship will lead to his loss of innocence, whereas for the pilot it will lead to the rediscovery of the lost innocence of his childhood and then, through suffering, to the achievement of a "higher" innocence. Thus the little prince "grows down" into this world (disillusionment) as the pilot "grows up" (re-illusionment)[1] and reclaims his childhood destiny—his deeper, truer self.

In this chapter we will be using this story of the little prince and his new friend as a metaphor for the split internal condition and structure that follows severe trauma in the lives of some patients, many of whom were described in the previous chapters. These patients have often been abused or violated in their very humanness and come to believe they have lost their innocence or lost their souls, or both (see the case of Jennifer in Chapter 1). Because of their sensitive and highly attuned natures, they suffered significant relational trauma in their emotionally insensitive families—trauma severe enough to force them to withdraw parts of themselves into sanctuaries in the unconscious for safe-keeping. This withdrawal and sequestering of a "child" in the inner world ("on another planet") occurred outside their awareness—the inner structure becoming conscious only much later during their analytic process.

This division in the self presents a problem for these patients because their defenses naturally prevent them from risking their extraplanetary innocence in *this* world, for fear of re-traumatization. In fact, as we have seen in the previous chapters, it seems to be the intention of the self-care system to keep this soulful, pre-traumatic core of the infant-self out of the suffering that inevitably attends contact with reality—the necessary painful suffering that leads to development of ego-strength and ego-agency. As Helen Luke says in our epigraph above, "true suffering," i.e., transformative suffering, "belongs to innocence, not guilt."

The defensive structure that I have called the self-care system has two inherent features or aspects that make healing extremely difficult for these patients and those of us trying to help them. Both of these pernicious features are reflected in our story about the little prince and his new friend, the stranded airplane pilot.

1 The first such feature (more obvious in certain patients than others) is the sheer amount of aggression that appears to be necessary for the splitting of the psyche in cases of traumatic dissociation. We have already noted in earlier chapters—especially in Chapters 3 and 4—that when the defensive system is required to split-off and encapsulate an innocent remnant of the childhood self, we also find very negative aggressive voices

or powers in the inner world that keep this lost heart of the self demoralized and weighted down with a terrible sense of "original sin" and a hopelessness about ever re-attaching to others outside the system.

We also noted in Chapter 3 that while the defensive system starts off protective, it usually turns persecutory. The longer self-encapsulation continues, the worse the inner world becomes and the more aggression seems to be directed back at the child's vulnerability. Hence the progressed self often starts out as a protector, but rapidly turns into a persecutor.

In St. Exupéry's story, such self-persecutory aggression is not immediately apparent. But underneath the endearing innocence of the little prince and his charming extraplanetary life lurks *the violence that put him there in the first place and that threatens him every day of his existence.* I am referring to what St. Exupéry (2000: 24) calls the "catastrophe of the baobabs." As we read the story we come to understand that the dreaded baobabs are a scourge on the little prince's planet. The "soil of the planet is infested with their terrible seeds" (St. Exupéry 2000: 26), and they represent a continual threat, constantly springing up in a most demoralizing way, requiring constant vigilance and continual weeding. They threaten to turn the little prince's lovely planet into a nightmare of devastation. And, it turns out, *this threat of destruction is why the little prince has come to earth in the first place*—looking for a sheep to eat the baobabs and keep them from consuming everything good on his planet, including his one precious rose.

So, along with innocence, there's an insidious destructive force unfolding on asteroid B-612. The toxic seeds of the baobab have infected the little prince's sanctuary of innocence and he begins to realize that without radical action his innocence will turn into something "monstrous."

2 The second feature of the defensive system that makes for great difficulty in the healing of traumatic dissociation is the fact that the "sanctuary" of the unconscious into which the innocent remnant of the core-self retreats is inevitably infused with archetypal (omnipotent and grandiose) energies and images. Recall that Sandor Ferenczi described the classic split following dissociation, leading to a regressed self on the one hand, and progressed self on the other. In certain imaginative patients, these part-selves become *amplified* by the psyche's mytho-poetic dynamism. The regressed self or libidinal ego now becomes associated with *divinity*, i.e., becomes a *royal* little prince with a powerful sense of entitlement and a numinous charisma. This special "child" resists the process of humanization just as we saw Lucifer resist God's plan for the incarnation in Chapter 3.

Ordinarily in a child's life, "good enough" environmental provision transforms the bliss and terror of infantile omnipotence into ego-agency and creative living. As Freud said, where id was, ego shall be or, in Jung's language, archetypal affects and energies are humanized as they are processed through human relationship. But with a traumatic childhood, it is different. Mediation breaks down. Accordingly, we speak of

"un-mentalized" (Fonagy, 2001) or "unformulated" (Mitrani, 1996) experience remaining in a primitive, untransformed state.

Hans Loewald, the well-known Freudian analyst, has something important to say (1978) about how defenses become daimonic in this way. Expanding on Freud's ideas about the id, Loewald comments:

> there is something daemonic about the id, something about the dynamic unconscious that is, as in the Greek idea of daimon, neither attributable to the power of a personal god, nor a powerful force of the person *qua* individual or conscious being, but something in between having an impersonal character.
>
> (Loewald, 1978: 9)

For Loewald, it was not just the id that was daimonic. Defenses were daimonic too. These defenses operate in all of us, he says, from "beyond" the personal sphere:

> This implies that it is not we who defend, but something, some so-called defense mechanism, impersonal forces ... such "mechanisms," such forces are, or will [with great suffering] become our own, and may be appropriated—it is this potentiality for appropriation which constitutes the individual's moral propensity and which psychoanalytic interpretations use.... Unconscious defenses, as unconscious, are direct counterparts to unconscious instinctual forces; they grow in the same soil. In the moral movement of which I spoke, both become personalized, are re-created as personal; in our responsiveness they become our responsibility.
>
> (Loewald, 1978: 47–8)

In *The Little Prince*, daimonic powers and defenses are slowly transformed as the pilot and little prince gradually come to know each other. But there is a great deal of pain and resistance in this process—pain that has been avoided in the defensive splitting of the story's two worlds. On his little planet up there in the sky, the royal little prince is unable to really live and also, strangely, unable to die. These things can only happen to human beings "down here" in the ordinary world. In the story, he comes down into this world for just a year, but he has a profound effect upon it. For the lost pilot who he meets in the Sahara desert, life is never quite the same again.

The pilot in our story represents the grown-up, functioning, "false," or adaptive self of a person whose innocence and childhood animation have been split-off and are no longer available, being "on another planet." The pilot has *survived* his painful early life circumstances, externally. He is a perfectly well-adapted individual with many outer accomplishments in the world ... but he is not really *living*. He has lost his soul. He must learn how

to become a child again and discover or rediscover something worth living for—before he dies! He lives only in the practical "real" world. He has forgotten about the "other world," the magic of childhood, the reality of unseen things, the sacred secret at the center of the human heart. For this he needs the little prince, and their meeting marks the beginning of his restored sense of wholeness.

Clinically, healing the split between these two worlds (and the inner objects that populate them) will mean *a transformation in the self-care system* so that the innocent part of the patient—long since banished to its own planet by psychological defenses—can be allowed to suffer experience again in the presence of a witnessing other. Because it is a major goal of the self-care system—once established after trauma—*to keep the innocent part of the self out of suffering*, such suffering will be resisted with great tenacity. Untransformed omnipotent and grandiose energies associated with the purity and perfection of the inner world and its encapsulated child fight to maintain their unconscious "life." If things go well, *deo concedente*, these archaic powers slowly become humanized and enter the world of suffering experience again. We witnessed this transformative process in the case of Mike in Chapter 4.

In the therapy relationship, healing happens as a potential space—long since foreclosed by trauma—is re-created, inviting the lost heart of the self back into relationship. Both an inter-subjective and an intra-psychic (symbolic) "matrix" get created between the worlds and this potential space revives the unconscious longings from the patient's early life. The patient begins to hope and dream again and this newfound optimism with its magical innocent child infuses the therapist as well.

The case of Barbara

When our patients come into treatment, they often do not know that they house, within themselves, a little prince on another planet. They may have a vague sense of "something" inside which has been lost—something sacred, which is sometimes why they come to a Jungian analyst. But the inner space "between the worlds" has been blocked. Sometimes it takes months or years to make contact with this innocent part of the personality—like those aboriginal Stone-Age people in the Amazon jungle who weren't discovered by Western anthropologists until the 1960s or 1970s. But then, sometimes through a dream, or a shared moment of connection, contact will be made with the little prince part of the personality. Here, in a remarkable dream of a patient I will call "Barbara" is a vivid example of renewed contact with split-off innocence.

I was not working with Barbara at the time she had this dream. It occurred as she was settling into her first Jungian analysis in another city with a female colleague whom she consulted for anxiety and depression. She had grown up as the over-responsible oldest daughter in an upper

middle-class family with a handsome, charismatic, but emotionally remote father who she adored, and an emotionally unstable, narcissistic mother who she came to fear.

Her mother was several times hospitalized with manic-depressive illness, and in her manic periods at home she would lash out and hit and tear the house apart until little Barbara was literally beside herself with fear. She remembered her bowels constricting in terror as she would freeze or "go numb." She remembered hardening herself on the outside, trying to be good and tiptoe around the mother's volatile rages, all the while removing a part of herself emotionally on the inside, feeling angry, shameful, and "bad." "I went to a cold, remote place," she said. Then the psyche sent her this dream from that "cold remote place."

Green monster dream

I'm on a cold, dying planet, like what the arctic might be without snow. I'm a scout for an animal preservation center. I am on this planet to pick up surviving creatures, this time, a baby mammal similar to a bear cub. It would die here and it's the last of its kind.

I'm picking up the cub-creature from a way station. The cub was found and brought here by a being I know as "the emissary." The only hardy form of life in this eerie, gray world, this "emissary" searches out surviving creatures for transport to earth. The emissary remains behind a wall in the building because humans cannot tolerate his form. It is his choice to remain there, for the wall protects him from human revulsion. I find the emissary's mission and his plight very poignant.

I see the little cub, wrapped in a dirty, almost slimy fur blanket, rather like a polar bear's coat. I suddenly realize the blanket is alive—it's another creature from this planet. The voice of the emissary behind the wall is telling me how to care for the cub, and he explains that he found the blanket animal out there too, also abandoned. It kept the cub warm, and he hopes we will take it back to earth also. The emissary's voice is clear, cultured, and kind. I wonder how a being with such a beautiful voice can be too ugly to be seen.

I suddenly realize that the emissary loves the blanket animal deeply. I, on the other hand, am repulsed by it, and the emissary knows it. The blanket animal, wrapped around the cub smells, and its nature somehow seems slug-like. My clothes will be ruined from holding the blanket creature, but pity seizes me: it can't help what it is and deserves to live. My clothes don't matter, or my disgust, either. We will take the blanket creature and the cub back to earth and do the best we can for them both. I am struck with the thought of differences and the need for acceptance.

> I pick up both creatures and prepare to leave. Then the emissary asks if I would mind if he held the blanket creature (with its wrapped up cub) just one more time. I am achingly moved. I suddenly wonder if it is a baby of his kind, and if that is why he hides. The emissary tells me to step close to the wall, a smooth metallic surface in which there is a round opening. I step forward, and a bright green tentacle comes out and waves around searching for contact.
>
> I'm frozen in horror. I don't withdraw, partly because I can't react fast enough and partly because I said he could touch. The tentacle shoots out, wrapping itself under my bundle and catching on my clothing – ugh! The tentacle corrects, wraps around all of us in a tight squeeze, and retracts. It was all so quick! Now I know why the emissary must remain behind the wall: he is a green monster.

Barbara and her first analyst worked on that dream for a long time. Ten years later, when she moved to New York and we began our work together, the dream was still alive for her, and so was the question about its mysterious meaning. "I suffered that monster and loved him fiercely," Barbara said to me, "but I could not get him to earth in a way that felt real. Somehow that's my job here with you."

Intuitively, I felt she was probably right but I had no idea what to think about the green monster or how we might help him and/or his vulnerable cargo down to earth. Perhaps, I thought, her dream was giving her a chance to feel love and compassion for an innocent part of *herself* that was basically loving and good but so encumbered by shame that it had to be "walled off." Maybe in its isolated neediness it had begun to feel "disgusting." The monster's green tentacle reached out in love for "one last contact" with the blanket baby and its baby "cub." This led me to wonder if perhaps he embodied Barbara's early instinct for attachment itself—an instinct that in its innocence had been badly injured, shamed, and now retired to its dying planet, never to reach out again, until now, in this dream, perhaps because of the safety of her newfound therapy relationship with my colleague ten years earlier.

If we look at the green monster dream in light of our discussion of innocence thus far, what does it tell us? Unlike the little prince, alone on his planet, there are three images of innocence on Barbara's inner planet: the infant bear cub, the last of its species marooned there; the disgusting blanket animal that warms it; and then the protective and caring green monster who has a special affinity with the blanket creature. The green monster is an "emissary" of this planet (just as the dreamer's ego is the emissary from earth). The green monster is the "only hardy life-form in this eerie gray world," and searches out surviving, innocent creatures in order to transport them to earth.

And in an otherwise gray world, he is green! Robin van Loben Sels (2003: 78–9), in her book *A Dream in the World*, summarizes Jung's amplification of the color green:

> [green is] Aphrodite's color ... and older still, the color of Osiris, the reborn Egyptian god. Green is also the color of Sophia and the Holy Ghost, the color of life, procreation and resurrection. Greenness also connotes the benedicta veriditas, the "blessed greenness" which, according to Jung in Mysterium [Collected Works 14: para. 623], signifies the secret immanence of the *divine spirit of life in all things*.... Green signifies hope and the future.

So green is the *color of life and the renewal of life* in its vegetative form. The green monster would seem to be centrally concerned with life ... especially endangered life. He searches it out and saves it for eventual transfer to earth, where presumably it needs to go, in order (perhaps) to come alive again. Combing his dying planet for endangered life-forms he serves as a kind of psychic container and mediator ... a *soul-holder* for Barbara's animated core of aliveness marooned on another planet until she is ready to receive it back into her worldly life.

Barbara and I were both touched by the simple fact that the psyche does this, i.e., holds our soulful innocence and aliveness until such time as this innocent aliveness is ready for experience. It moved me just to think about this function of the psyche—and it moved Barbara too, especially as she felt the particular plight of the green monster, the deep loving attachment it had with the blanket creature and its baby. For Barbara, the poignant thing about this love was the inevitable loss it entailed, the "good-bye" that needed to be said. This combination of love and loss will prove to be the central agony in our story, *The Little Prince*, as we shall see below.

Over the ensuing years of Barbara's and my analytic adventure together, there would be other dreams and associated personal material that would help us understand how the innocent "bear cub" and its "blanket creature" would be forced onto a cold, remote planet within her soul—while she, like the stranded airplane pilot in our story, labored "down below" in a life deprived of its "little prince." And we would also come to understand how the protective defense (green monster) came into being in order to hold this animated, vulnerable part of herself until it could be transferred to earth, i.e., into her ego-experience and its individuation. We will return to Barbara's story at two intervals in the course of retelling the story of *The Little Prince*.

The story: a little prince between the worlds

The "two worlds" we have been exploring in this book are illustrated in our story, in dramatic contrast to each other. First, we have the spiritual

world of the "divine child"—the little prince, living on his tiny perfumed planet, tenderly watering his beloved single rose, devotedly cleaning his three tiny volcanoes, and diligently moving his chair 44 times so he can enjoy the beauty of multiple sunsets. Listening every night to the music in the stars up there, he lives contentedly "in his own world." As yet, he doesn't know he's lonely. He has not yet encountered conflict or experienced betrayal in order for his innocence to be transformed by experience.

Then there are the so-called grown-ups. They occupy a parallel universe in our story (some of them live on asteroids too) and they all seem to be embodiments of emptiness and absurdity. Our crashed pilot is very grown-up, but his life has come to a dead end. He has crashed his plane in the Sahara desert and is trying to repair his engine. The story tells us that as a child, the pilot had a vivid imagination just like the little prince, but that he has forgotten. As a child he would draw mysterious and remarkable creatures like boa constrictors with elephants inside them, but the grown-ups around him all thought these were hats! They never understood his drawings and slowly, sadly, he gave up drawing boa constrictors from the outside and the inside. Instead, he spoke only of golf, bridge, politics, and neckties. Thereafter the grownups found him to be a very sensible person. But something in him was no longer alive—except maybe when he flew his airplane.

So the two worlds in our story—the magical world of childhood on the one hand, innocent and full of mystery and imagination—and the "grown-up" world on the other hand, full of "sensible" things, albeit meaningless empty and boring ... these two worlds are separated by cosmic distances. Just like in the individuation process, a major dynamic of our story is the separation between these two worlds and how this will be resolved. Each is incomplete without the other. The little prince is quintessentially alive, but is all alone on his own planet, living in a bubble of unknowing naivety. The pilot is going through the motions of life, having become a very sensible, worldly man, rushing around doing important things, but without a soul.

If life is to be lived to its fullest—if *wholeness* is to be realized, then these separate worlds will have to get together. This will require a particular kind of conscious suffering—a particular depth of suffering—that neither the little prince nor the crashed pilot has experienced before. Our story tells us that the suffering required in this process has to do with enormous sadness and grief, *consciously experienced.* This grief seems to happen *only where the two worlds meet and are held in tension, consciously.* Innocence must suffer experience and in this sense be "disillusioned." At the same time, the dried-up ego-dominated world of the pilot must suffer the grief of loss and then "re-illusionment," which means feeling things that have been repressed or forsaken, and allowing life to be re-animated by contact with the "other" world of the little prince on his planet. In effect, this will

constitute the return of the soul to the body—the return of aliveness and *meaning*, which is a two-world construct.

Innocence risking experience

In our story, the process of betrayal of innocence happens to the little prince as he begins his journey to the earth—from one asteroid to another, like stepping stones. His first moment of disillusionment comes with the geographer who tells him that his beloved rose is not even worth recording in his book because it is "ephemeral" and will die! The little prince suddenly is confronted by the reality of death, and he is flooded with a feeling of incredible vulnerability. He feels guilty that he left his rose so unprotected. He begins to feel very troubled by this new awareness. He starts to be lonely for companionship. He wishes he could find somebody to talk to.

After further adventures, he next comes to earth and, true to our original Western myth of consciousness in the Garden of Eden, meets the snake. He asks the snake why there are no men in the desert. The snake can see that the little prince is still mostly innocent, having just fallen from a star, and he feels sorry for what lies ahead on this "Earth of granite." He assures the new arrival that if things get too bad for him, he can get him back to his home planet in no time ... with just one little bite. The little prince understands perfectly (St. Exupéry, 2000: 51). Here the snake, like Lucifer in the Genesis account, stands for consciousness, but also for unconsciousness through dissociation. When experience gets too much, he can put you in an altered state and remove you "back home," just like the defensive agency of the self-care system.

So, armed with this new knowledge, the little prince continues his journey in search of companions. On a lonely mountain peak he cries out "Let's be friends. I'm lonely!" "I'm lonely.... I'm lonely.... I'm lonely..." (St. Exupéry, 2000: 54) answers the echo. And then the real pain begins. The little prince stumbles into a garden of 5,000 roses and is suddenly overcome with another disillusionment. His single rose had told him that she was the only flower of her kind in all the world, but she had lied to him! She was just a common rose. The little prince realizes that all he had all along was a miserable common rose—together with three motley volcanoes, one of which was extinct! Betrayed and disillusioned, he suddenly didn't feel like a very great prince, "and he lay down in the grass and wept" (St. Exupéry, 2000: 56).

Taming: wheatfields

At this crucial moment the fox appears and the little prince finds his first friend on earth. The fox is a kind of psycho-pomp who teaches the little

prince how to love, and his lessons are movingly relevant to our work as psychotherapists, so I want to examine the dialogue carefully.

> "Come and play with me," the little prince proposed. "I'm feeling so sad."
> "I can't play with you," the fox said. "I am not tamed."
> "Ah! Excuse me," said the little prince. But upon reflection he added, "What does tamed mean?"
>
> (St. Exupéry, 2000: 58)

Then the fox (speaking like an attachment theorist!) explains that "tame" means "to establish ties." This confuses the little prince, so the fox explains further:

> For me, you're only a little boy just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you have no need of me, either. To you, I am just a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, we'll need each other. You'll be the only boy in the world for me. I'll be the only fox in the world for you.
>
> (St. Exupéry, 2000: 59)

> my life will be filled with sunshine. I'll know the sound of footsteps that will be different from all the rest. Other footsteps send me back underground. Yours will call me out of my burrow like music. And then, look! Do you see the wheatfields over there? ... You have hair the color of gold. So it will be wonderful, once you've tamed me! The wheat, which is golden, will remind me of you. And I'll love the sound of the wind in the wheat.
>
> (St. Exupéry, 2000: 60)

All right, all right, says the little prince, I'll tame you, but "what should I do?"

> "You have to be very patient," the fox answered. "First you'll sit down a little ways away from me, over there, in the grass. I'll watch you out of the corner of my eye, and you won't say anything. Language is the source of misunderstandings. But day by day, you'll be able to sit a little closer."
>
> (St. Exupéry, 2000: 60)

And so it was that the little prince tamed the fox.

And there was something else the fox taught the little prince. Taming doesn't work right unless the little prince comes back every day *at the same time.* You must observe "certain rites," the fox informs him—regular times

for meeting so that the meetings are honored as special and can be anticipated. In other words, real friendship takes time, regular times. As applied to the analytic process, this is a beautiful example of how the regularity and dependability of the therapy hour and the analytic "frame" actualizes a different kind of time, separating "sacred" time from profane time, *chronos* from *kairos*. This regularity, says the fox, is an important part of proper taming.

Also, notes the fox, if you have these rites you'll start to get excited in anticipation. If your new friend doesn't show up at the appointed time, well then you'll "discover what it costs to be happy!" (St. Exupéry, 2000: 61). In other words, the inevitable cost of attaching to a mortal human being is suffering, and this suffering is not for those who "have to be carefully kept," i.e., not for those who refuse to risk their innocence.

Finally, the little prince must take his leave and the fox says:

> "Oh! ... I shall cry."
> "It is your own fault," said the little prince. "I wished you no harm but you wanted me to tame you."
> "Yes, indeed," said the fox.
> "But you are going to cry!" said the little prince.
> "That is so," said the fox.
> "Then it has not helped you in any way!"
> "It has helped me," said the fox,
> "because of the colour of the wheatfields."
>
> (St. Exupéry, 2000: 80)

The implications of this beautiful passage for our work in psychotherapy (and in life) deserves some reflection.

First, the fox is describing *the way love lights up the world* and its exquisite beauty. If the little prince "tames" him, the beauties of the world—wheatfields, for example—will remind him of his special friend. The world will become radiant, like his feelings of pleasure in the presence of his friend, and every moment will share that sense of "splendour in the grass" experienced by the innocent child in Wordsworth's "Ode" (2004a: 163). Of course, this brings with it the prospect of loss—this is the inevitable "price" of happiness.

Such hope-filled "love," with its re-activation of lost innocence and its prospect of a union "between the worlds," frequently appears in the early stages of the psychoanalytic transference, and has been discussed under the general topic of *idealization*. How we conceptualize the idealizing energy of this hope-filled love is an important part of our theoretical orientation and I have addressed this topic *in extenso* elsewhere.[2] Freud (1957: 105) would have described it as "nothing but" a transfer of the lost state of primary narcissism onto the beloved. In a similar vein, American theorist Otto Kernberg (1975: 226–9) saw such idealizing love as a projection of a

grandiose self, conceptualizing it as a defense against underlying frustrated dependency needs and rage resulting from this frustration.

But such hope-filled idealizing love is more than a defense. It represents the inter-penetration of this world by another world, a rekindling of transitional space through the vehicle of relationship. While it is true that this has a narcissistic quality at the beginning, it will eventually give way to more mature forms of self–other relatedness, and represents a normal first stage in early infant–mother attachment. Heinz Kohut (1971) has underscored the importance of accepting such idealizations in the early stages of analysis, demonstrating how they represent "efforts" on the part of the psyche to restore missing segments of psychic structure. The same point is made by Edward Edinger (1972: 59), who, following Jung, sees early forms of idealization in treatment as the projection of the central archetype of the Self, representing the re-establishment and possible repair of the ego–Self axis.

Second, the fox is describing how the idealizing love that begins as one's innocence is activated, gradually gives way to more mature forms of relatedness in which innocence is glimpsed at a higher level. This is facilitated—says the fox—by an intervening symbol, something shared that is objectively beautiful, like wheatfields. The symbol allows for that simultaneous presence and absence of the object that makes for separation and individuation, for "object constancy." Winnicott (1969a) would say that separation comes about through transitional experiencing in a movement from object-relating to object-use. Michael Eigen notes that this transit means negotiating an "area of faith" in which "The subject is reconstituted through a fresh realization that all is not self in disguise and, as in transitional experiencing, tastes a wholling innocence, although on a new plane" (Eigen, 1981: 415).

However we might describe this necessary suffering-into-reality, it seems to be a universal process in which innocence is transformed through the forest of experience into a richer, higher, or more mature form.

We cannot accomplish this alone. The necessary suffering in the process must be *mediated*, and this mediation can occur with the help of various intermediate (third) "objects." Psychoanalysis privileges *interpersonal* mediation. It finds the missing third in the infant's first attachment experiences with the mother and perhaps—if this has gone badly—in the *replayed* attachment experiences with some other person later, such as a psychotherapist.

But in addition to the extraverted (interpersonal) form of mediation, there are other (intra-psychic) relationships that can bridge the gaps created by trauma and restore the soul. These transitional spaces are no less important but they occur between the ego and an *inner Other* who comes to presence through non-personal contact. Harold Searles makes an eloquent appeal for the importance of the "non-human environment" (1960), which for him especially involves nature, the world of animals, the

exquisite beauty of the environment (like wheatfields), and the art and cultural products that celebrate the inner landscape. This includes dreams and all the compelling realities of the mytho-poetic imagination.

The fox's wisdom suggests that these two transitional "spaces" (inner and outer) go together and augment one another in a meaningful way. He suggests that the capacity for loving another person in their own separateness and the apprehension of the world's beauty go hand in hand. The beauty of the wheatfields supplies a missing third and somehow its metaphoric presence makes loss—maybe even the loss of life itself—worth it. Children and foxes seem to know this, and adults (especially trauma survivors) have to learn it or relearn it.

This is essentially the same message that the little prince later has reinforced in his exchange with the railway switchman. People riding on trains are always in a hurry to get somewhere, but they don't know what they're looking for, says the switchman. Yes, says the little prince,

> "Only the children know what they're looking for.... They spend their time on a rag doll and it becomes very important to them, and if it is taken away from them, they cry...." "They're lucky," the switchman said.
>
> (St. Exupéry, 2000: 65)

In other words, children are not afraid to love and to risk their innocence in a process of taming that leads inevitably to loss (of the original condition) but also to something more—to a glimpse of wheatfields and, through a process of mourning, to a higher innocence that brings a connection between the worlds, and hence a greater *meaning*.

Invisible things of the heart

To return to our story: Shortly after his description of taming, the fox shares some of his innermost secrets with the little prince. The first is that you can't really understand a person unless you've tamed them. The second is that it is only with the heart that one can see clearly. What is essential is invisible to the eye. The third is that one must spend time with what one has tamed, and the final secret is that you become responsible for what you've tamed—responsible forever! (St. Exupéry, 2000: 64–5). The little prince suddenly realizes that he is responsible for his rose, for he has watered her, sheltered her, and spent time with her, and she is unique in all the world. He has tamed her.

The fox's instructions about taming remind me of a poignant story told by Los Angeles psychoanalyst Shelley Alhanati (2004) about her first experience of really being met on a soul level by another human being.

When she was a little girl of five, Shelley Alhanati went through a time when she was mute. The family had just moved from New York City to

Athens, Greece and little Shelley had to leave her wonderfully attuned grandmother for a raucous, boisterous atmosphere in her new home, where she spent her time hiding under a table or behind a potted plant they had in the living room. Most people dealt with her by trying to cajole her into talking. Then,

> One day, an uncle came over to meet me for the first time, and he did something different. Everything was loud and boisterous, and I was hiding behind a tree on the balcony, as usual. He came over, sat down near me, picked up a toy bird, played with it silently, and then went home without ever having said a word to me. For a long time after that, I would talk only to him.
>
> I instinctively knew, by the quality of his presence, that he would find me through the interior of his own heart. Paradoxically, the message I got by his silence was that he would value my words. So I felt safe to speak. Neither of us could have articulated what the problem was, why I wasn't talking, but on another level, in an invisible, silent way, we were understanding each other.
>
> I consider that my first experience with analysis.
>
> (Alhanati, 2004: 759)

Shelly Alhanati's uncle had tamed her. *He had found her through the interior of his own heart.* The author does not mention the toy bird that her uncle *played with* in this vignette, but one can imagine that this animated non-verbal gesture was crucially important to little Shelley and her ultimate attachment to this uncle. The toy bird was an intermediate "third" that could join the two silent partners in a potential space without words. In the psychoanalytic situation sometimes the "toy bird" is a dream, sometimes a gesture, sometimes a sand-tray picture, a movie, or shared enthusiasm for an insight, a book or a poem.

As psychoanalysts, I believe that we must find a way to meet our traumatically wounded patients in this intermediate "space." Otherwise we will never meet the shy, mute, and innocent children hiding inside them. We must open our hearts to the invisible realities of the human soul and learn the value of silence and poetry and embodied presence, without interpretation. There is no rational diagnostic understanding of a patient without first "taming" them. That is the lesson of the fox.

This is also the lesson of contemporary neuroscience as applied to psychotherapy with trauma survivors. In order to reach the split-off innocent core of our patients, says Allan Schore (2003b: 262–5), we must learn to attune to the "implicit relational knowing" that comes from right-brain-to-right-brain communication and that is the essence of *intersubjectivity.* Such communication tends to involve non-verbal, unconscious, affective transactions that result in mutual affect-regulation. It is in the right hemisphere that early relational trauma is encoded and the unconscious affects

embedded there can only be reached and re-connected to left-hemispheric language structures if we are prepared to engage the patient in interactive emotional and empathic communication that mirrors the early infant–caregiver dyad and its inter-subjective attachment patterns. It is the non-verbal, implicit patterns of embodied presence (gaze, cadence, prosidy) and overall affective attunement between the psychoanalytic partners that create the safety necessary for contact with the split-off child in the psyche—the little prince on his planet.

Little prince meets pilot

In our story the little prince has been on earth for almost a year when he finally runs into a human being—the stranded airplane pilot. The pilot is asleep on the sand and the little prince wakes him with a request: "Draw me a sheep ... please?" "What?" "Draw me a sheep" (St. Exupéry, 2000: 4).

The pilot is completely thunderstruck. He rubs his eyes, blinks hard, and looks carefully around, and there is this extraordinary little boy watching him gravely. So the pilot draws him the only thing he knows how to draw—a boa constrictor from the outside that looks to all the grown-ups like a hat. The pilot is astonished when the little fellow says "No! No! I don't want an elephant inside a boa constrictor. A boa constrictor is very dangerous and an elephant would get in the way. Where I live, everything is very small. I need a sheep. Draw me a sheep" (St. Exupéry, 2000: 6).

So the pilot, now suddenly awakened to his earlier forgotten artistic life, draws a sheep. But the little prince is not satisfied with this sheep, nor with the next nor the next, until finally the pilot draws a box with three holes in it and explains to the little prince that his sheep is inside. Now the little prince is completely satisfied: " 'Look,' he says, bending his head over the drawing, 'he has gone to sleep' " (St. Exupéry, 2000: 7).

In this charming initial contact, we have a wonderful example of a connection made on the level of the child's imagination. Child to child one might say. The pilot has not met anyone in 30 years who understood his drawing and the little prince has not met a grown-up who understood, as the fox said, that "it is only with the heart that one can see clearly."

I think there are moments like this in the psychotherapy situation where true healing begins. Perhaps they are moments where the patient feels deeply understood for the first time in a long time. But such moments happen for the therapist as well. Perhaps the genuine innocent yearning within the child-in-the-patient awakens in the therapist his or her own longings and a heartfelt glance or smile is exchanged between the analytic partners. Often the child-to-child moments are completely unplanned. A funny moment in which the therapist says something totally absurd, or "puts his foot in it" somehow, or a story the patient tells hits the funnybone of the therapist so that a healing moment of mutual laughter is shared.

As Barbara and I began our analytic adventure together against the backdrop of her green monster dream, her psyche began to out-picture in dreams further evidence that something dreadful had happened to her innocence—some kind of early attachment trauma when she was very young. We did not know what this was, until a fortuitous event occurred. Around the end of our third year of work together, Barbara's maternal uncle died and letters from her mother to this uncle were found and sent to Barbara. These letters spanned the period of her infancy. In one, dated on the occasion of Barbara's younger sister's birth, her mother extolled the virtues of her newborn baby, adding as an after-thought, "I can report no news of Barbie, as I haven't seen her for so long." At the time Barbara was only 16 months old ... a crucial time in an infant's attachment to her mother.

Further investigation found that little Barbara had been sent to live with another relative while the mother went to hospital and gave birth to her baby sister. This separation had lasted for over six weeks! Here was a major rupture in the infant/mother attachment bond—unknown until now. Suddenly Barbara and I acquired a new understanding of that feeling she had often tried to describe as a "speechless horror"—what she called her "deer in the headlights" panic at certain times of abject terror. At these times she fell into what Michael Balint (1979) called "the basic fault." For example, she would lose herself, dry-mouthed, when she entered a new group of people, wordlessly frozen in the face of real or potential rejection. Despite her many accomplishments and her completely "normal" life in other respects, she carried a deep sense of insecurity, always stimulated by the petrifying threat of loss of love. This new information also gave us an explanation for what she had earlier described as her chronic head-banging as a child. As we reviewed this early history together we could sense the presence of a "dying planet" with its split-off innocent creatures, *the place Barbara's innocence went for safekeeping when nothing satisfying was possible with her actual mother.* Here it was held by the green monster.

As we explored this history, other major attachment ruptures emerged. For example, at age 11 or 12 she and her younger sister each were the proud owners of a kitten. Barbara was absolutely crazy about her kitten. But for some reason, her narcissistic mother grew impatient with these animals. "I've had it with these kittens," she screamed. One day, prearranged by the mother, a man and his daughter showed up at the door and took the kittens away. Barbara watched in horror. She recalls splitting in two at this moment, one part beside herself with unbearable white hot pain, another part watching the whole thing, like filming it, thinking to herself "I'll never forget this, or forgive you.... I must see this ... get it into my system" Barbara thought. "It was a truth about my mother never to be forgotten ... preserved like holding it in amber," she said.

Barbara remembers her inner vow with herself around this time that nothing would ever "get to her" again, including her mother's repeated hospitalizations for manic depressive illness, which started around this time. On the surface she led a perfectly normal life, but underneath there was a "place" where she was numb and strangely free of any feeling—at least any vulnerable feeling. However, her anger and uncontrollable temper tantrums now became a problem. Sometimes she couldn't stop herself and felt terrible about it. With each rageful act, Barbara became more convinced of her own badness, her own irredeemable defect or fault. Whatever innocence was left in her now had retired to a dying planet, in another galaxy, far far away, and the dreaded beobabs were everywhere.

But thanks to her dream, and now her mother's lost letters, contact had been made with the previously unbearable pain that had severed her innocence and left her soul lost in a frozen landscape. When Barbara started her therapy with me, the early attachment bond that had been ruptured so early with her mother, and then re-injured again in many subsequent relationships, got slowly re-established with me. We grew fond of each other. One might say we "tamed" each other. There was always the danger that I would repeat the early abandonment in the transference (and in fact I did this on several occasions), but when this repetition threatened the relationship, we worked it through together. It was a stormy time but not without sunny periods. Through this struggle, Barbara began to matter to me and I to her. I was very moved by her courage and passionate search to find the lost parts of herself and I began to find our weekly meetings increasingly meaningful. This mutual affection and genuine caring seemed to open up the landscape of another planet inside her and the equivalent of the little prince began to make his appearance. We began to piece together a coherent history of her early life and things began to "make sense."

As if to give us some encouragement that those remote parts of her were beginning to risk attachment again, she had the following dream:

> I'm a young woman in Antarctica. I'm pregnant ... I'm part of the remnant of my tribe (like eskimos) with whom I've lived until recently. Now the remnant of my tribe and myself are living in a kind of settlement established by the Russians on the edge of our territory. The remnant of my tribe has decided to leave the settlement and to return to the old ways [and to the interior]. This is a secret that must not be found out by the Russians who want them to assimilate. I am somehow to help them escape back to their aboriginal homeland.
>
> My people feel they must go back to the old ways because they have lived in this settlement for a generation or more, but they've lost the ability to build igloos or something. They have little huts

> to live in but nothing to do. It's taken the soul out of them.... They lead a stifled and stunted existence without anything to live for. I cannot go back with my people—it's a risk. My people feel they must either leave or die trying. I'm very supportive.... I say go back! Go! Recover your souls! I want them to be free, but it's very very sad, because I won't see them again and will never belong to them like I have for years. Yet I want my baby to be born safely. This is my dilemma.
>
> My pregnancy means I can't go with them and must return with the Russians to civilization, where I'll get better food and medical care. The baby is a boy – its not clear if I'll be allowed to keep the baby. My job is to get the baby born! He's not my baby! i.e., I am a kind of "channel" for his entry into life but I may not have control over him. He can then live – either as a Russian or not. This is what life has presented me ... a "just so story."

Barbara and I both instantly recognized the similarity between this dream and the green monster dream: a frozen landscape, albeit this time not on another planet. And this time she's pregnant and the carrier of a child whose father is unknown and the baby doesn't belong just to her either. The baby is the baby of "two worlds"—the aboriginal Eskimo world where the pregnancy took place, and the adapted ego-world of modern Russia, where the baby will be born safely and live its life. What does this suggest?

One thing that occurred to us is that Barbara was now the "emissary" delivering her unborn baby from the frozen world to "this" world and she was doing this for the child's safety. It was as though she had taken over the function of the green monster! Her strong feeling in the dream was grief that she would lose her special relationship to these Eskimo people. She was making a transition and doing so for the sake of the child and its potential life. (In the green monster dream it was just the bear cub ... now it's a human child and she's delivering it.)

At the time, Barbara and I did not recognize the potential symbolic implications of her bearing a dream-child with "dual origins" and a mysterious unknown father. These factors made her dream a kind of "annunciation dream." The child she carried seemed like "something more" than just her child. He was a "little prince" and what he represented was somehow related to the mystery of her own individuation process. She must love this child without possessing it. And the affective marker of this fact was the great sadness she felt in the dream about having to leave the frozen land where she had lived for a whole generation! Like in *The Little Prince*, the two worlds must remain separated as innocence enters experience. Love and grief are the elastic that holds them together.

The Little Prince concluded: the pilot begins to understand

In the next stage of our story we find the little prince teaching the pilot the lessons he's learned from the fox. It has now been eight days since the pilot has broken down and he is out of water. The little prince suggests they go look for a well in the desert—a very stupid idea the pilot thinks. But somehow he has been touched by the little prince and so he consents. They walk all day and into the night, finally sitting down under the stars in silent reverie. " 'The stars are beautiful' ... says the little prince, because of a flower you don't see ... and ... 'what makes the desert so beautiful,' he continues, 'is that it hides a well, somewhere' " (St. Exupéry, 2000: 68).

The pilot begins to understand that the invisible secrets hidden in the human heart are the source of life's beauty and meaning and suddenly he is deeply moved. He picks up the sleeping little prince in his arms and walks into the night. He is suddenly in touch with the exquisite beauty and vulnerability of that fragile innocent creature in his arms:

> It was as if I was carrying a fragile treasure. It actually seemed to me there was nothing more fragile on Earth. By the light of the moon, I gazed at that pale forehead, those closed eyes, those locks of hair trembling in the wind, and I said to myself, *What I'm looking at is only a shell. What's most important is invisible...*
>
> As his lips parted in a half smile, I said to myself, again, *What moves me so deeply about this sleeping little prince is his loyalty to a flower —the image of a rose shining within him like the flame within a lamp, even when he's asleep....* And I realized he was even more fragile than I had thought. Lamps must be protected: A gust of wind can blow them out....
>
> And walking on like that, I found the well at daybreak.
>
> (St. Exupéry, 2000: 69)

And the well the pilot discovers is no ordinary well. It is a magical well with a bucket and a pulley that sings as the bucket is lowered. Like the biblical story of Jesus at the well, it contains living water—the water of life. The pilot realizes that this water was something entirely different from ordinary nourishment. "It was born of our walk beneath the stars, of the song of the pulley, of the effort of my arms. It did the heart good, like a present" (St. Exupéry, 2000: 71).

Suddenly the pilot feels overwhelmed with grief. He begins to realize that the little prince is planning to leave him, to return to his star and his rose, and that he has made a private pact with the snake to end his suffering on earth and send him back, exactly on his anniversary! The pilot tries to prevent this, tries to kill the snake who will do this dirty deed, but the little prince has already made his decision. It is the anniversary of his

coming to earth, his star will be exactly above the spot where he came down, and now he must go home, home to his rose.

"Once again I felt chilled by the sense of something irreparable. And I realize I couldn't bear the thought of never hearing that laugh again. For me it was like a spring of fresh water in the desert" (St. Exupéry, 2000: 76). The little prince can sense the pilot's fear and so, in a repeat of his parting from the fox, where he had learned about the wheatfields, he reassures the pilot that their inevitable parting will be assuaged by a gift—it *will be the gift of his laughter.*

"What are you saying?" asks the incredulous pilot. The little prince explains (it's the same explanation the fox gave him). It has to do with an intermediate symbol, like wheat-fields:

> "When you look up at the sky at night, since I'll be living on one of them, since I'll be laughing on one of them, for you it'll be as if all the stars are laughing. You'll have stars that can laugh!" And he laughed again.
>
> "And when you're consoled (everyone eventually is consoled), you'll be glad you've known me. You'll always be my friend. You'll feel like laughing with me. And you'll open your window sometimes just for the fun of it.... And your friends will be amazed to see you laughing while you're looking up at the sky. Then you'll tell them, 'Yes, it's the stars; they always make me laugh!' And they'll think you're crazy. It'll be a nasty trick I played on you..."
>
> And he laughed again.
>
> "And it'll be as if I had given you, instead of stars, a lot of tiny bells that know how to laugh..."
>
> (St. Exupéry, 2000: 77–8)

Six years later, as the pilot relates his story, he acknowledges that he has overcome a part of his great sorrow through the gift the little prince left him—but only a part. He realized that his great sadness was the inevitable price for loving someone. As the fox had taught him, one runs the risk of crying a bit if one allows oneself to be tamed (St. Exupéry, 2000: 73). And he listened to the stars at night, like 500 million little bells, and sometimes the little bells all changed themselves into tears. But nothing in the universe could ever be the same. Because the little prince had been here, and there were now the wheatfields, and the laughing stars with their special invisible secret that only he and his little friend shared.

Lessons from our story

If we translate this into psychological language, we would say that following trauma, the innocent life in us cannot continue unharmed unless it leaves its encapsulation—its "planet"—in the unconscious and enters the flow of life

and suffering "here below." Ultimately, this *reconnection* will result in a new sense of aliveness and healing, but the process will entail a capacity for great sorrow, for great grief. This will require growing affect-tolerance. Like the pilot in our story, Barbara had become conscious of her little prince and had been re-animated by his presence. And true to St. Exupéry's story, she was also aware of a great sadness in giving up this "immortal" or "absolute" innocence and suffering the loss of her frozen landscape and its aboriginal people. Her innocence was now suffering experience and could not return to the immortal world where its life had been preserved yet frozen. There was a sacrifice in this that she was willing to make. This was the *humanization* of something *divine* and therefore felt like a loss. And part of the lesson Barbara and I were learning was that these two worlds had to remain separated ... *except for a symbolic link*, i.e., "wheatfields."

This link between the worlds is life-giving, the blessed greenness, absolutely essential if the soul is to live in the world. And this possibility of aliveness, wrapped in sorrow, emerges when *something more* is glimpsed *between the worlds* if that intermediate space has been quickened by human love. The little prince in our story is an emissary of this love. He is a child negotiating between the worlds of innocence and experience ... a divine child who carries both worlds in himself as his own tragic and beautiful *dual destiny*.

Barbara: a late dream

Space does not permit a full account of Barbara's analysis or the details of how, together, we tracked the descent and *incarnation* of that innocent life that represented her lost soul, or how we struggled together to survive the inevitable ruptures that threatened to send her innocence back into hiding again. But toward the end of our process together she had a dream that we both recognized immediately as a further commentary on the green monster dream. The dream was a simple image:

> Green tendrils of a plant were waving in the breeze, with an accompanying voice-over that said: "I am the true vine."

Barbara knew in the dream that this phrase was "biblical," but she didn't know who said it or where the verse was found. Curious myself after hearing the dream in session, I got up and went over to my bookcase where a large Bible and concordance was shelved. I looked up "vine" in the concordance and was referred to chapter 15 in the *Gospel of John*. I read the passage aloud to Barbara:

Jesus said:

> *I am the true vine*, and my Father is the vine-grower. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.... Just as the

branch cannot bear fruit unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. If you abide in me, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

(John 15:1–11)

Barbara and I could feel a deep spiritual truth flooding into the space between us like a blessing, although neither of us could grasp its full meaning. Such moments of mystery are by no means common in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, but they do occur and this fact is not often noted in the literature of psychoanalysis. Shelley Alhanati is an exception. She notes that such experiences are both beautiful and painful at once: "The powerful feelings of love, reverence, and awe expressed in beautiful, intimate exchanges with patients, such as the ones I just described, inspire in us both exquisite pleasure and exquisite pain" (Alhanati, 2002: 130).

This is what Barbara and I felt as she told her dream and I read the biblical passage. In that moment, the wisdom of the psyche came into full view. It was as though the *benedicta veritas*—the blessed greenness—had settled over us both, blessing us, and filling the "third" space between us with a beauty and a mystery whose meaning could only be sensed and felt, not fully known.

Conclusions

Looking back, and with the benefit of hindsight, we might approach the meaning of Barbara's dreams with the following reflections. The psyche was clearly making a statement here by superimposing the green *tendril* of the vine, identified as Christ, with the "bright green tentacle" of the green monster as it reached out to touch its soon-to-be-lost blanket baby with its wrapped content, the endangered cub. How might we understand this?

Remembering that the green monster is a kind of *shepherd* who wanders his planet looking for endangered life-forms in order to bring them back for transport to earth so they can be saved, we are immediately struck by the parallel associations in the Bible which identify Christ as a *shepherd*. In John's gospel, Jesus is spoken of as the "good shepherd" (10:14), in First Peter (5:4) as the "chief shepherd" and in Hebrew 13:20 as the "great shepherd," all references to his compassionate caring for the lost sheep among his people. These references also allude to the innocence of the lambs that any good shepherd saves and protects after the new lambs are born.

Christ is also himself the "innocent one," unblemished by sin, whose loving, compassionate attitude toward children and their innocence is shown in several biblical passages:

> Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
>
> (Matthew 18:1–6)

> "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them.
>
> (Mark 10:13–16)

British psychoanalyst Margaret Arden (1998) makes this primacy of childhood innocence the center of her understanding of psychoanalytic work:

> For me, the transformation produced by insight in the consulting room is symbolically equivalent to the spiritual journey towards enlightenment. Psychoanalysis is a new version of the ancient theme shared by all the great religions. The loss of illusion, the giving up of attachment to a false reality, the inevitability of suffering and expiation are all present in psychoanalysis.... Every person who seeks analysis is on a personal pilgrimage.
>
> The Christian maxim "unless you become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" ... is ... my marker of the true self. False self behavior is usually manipulative and destructive of psychic truth. All our theories can be seen as ways of unraveling the destructive processes or defenses which the patient uses. The miracle of psychoanalysis—and it is a miracle—is that when a person comes to understand the core of his or her childhood experience, all the anger, all the rejection of life, turns out to have been for one purpose—to preserve, at whatever cost, the child who is capable of love.
>
> (Arden, 1998: 4–5)

The Christian story referenced by Barbara's "green tendril" dream is centrally concerned with this process of preservation of the innocent "child who is capable of love." And yet, in that story, preservation is not enough. Once grown, the innocent child is destined to be sacrificed on the cross, a mythic theme that repeats itself in the animal sacrifice of all early cultures where an unblemished, "pure" lamb must be chosen as a sacrifice to God. Here things get more complicated, but it will perhaps not be lost on the reader that the main theme of our story *The Little Prince*—at least the way we are interpreting it—is the *sacrifice of innocence*—its "descent" to this world and then its voluntary death at the instigation of the snake.

Here, a personal question that has always vexed me, growing up in a Christian community, is perhaps relevant. I have often wondered why

dogmatic Christianity has always insisted on Christ's *innocence on the cross*—other than the ostensible rationale of the Pauline Epistles and the later Church, i.e., that only in this way could he die for *our* sins, and thus relieve us of the hellfire and damnation of a punishing God who would otherwise kill us, but now didn't have to. His bloodlust was slaked, so to speak. This idea of God as a bloodthirsty cannibal and of Christ as our "proxy" always seemed a preposterous dogma to me.

If we tried to find a *psychological* meaning in that dogma, as Jung insisted we should—in other words, if we could find our way to an understanding of the peculiar pairing of innocence and crucifixion in the Christian story—what might this portend?

Could it be, I wondered, that the deep truth embedded in these rituals might be that we cannot (apparently) become fully human until we can accept the human condition and that this is more difficult than we thought? The difficult part being *that we must let the innocent (God-identified) part of us suffer experience in order to grow a soul?* This would mean letting ourselves be tamed, and facing the grief and loss that accompanies such an event—anticipating this grief and choosing it anyway. Choosing the *lifegiver*. With the realization that we are going to lose whatever we love anyway in this life, and that there is a terrible sadness to this, one that requires compassionate mediation through love (relationship) and the experience of beauty (art), we come to appreciate why trauma survivors often refuse the sacrifice and try to keep their innocence enshrined on another planet, adrift in eternity.

John Tarrant, whose beautiful book *The Light Inside the Dark* (1998), circles and circles around this difficult reality, puts it like this:

> We see a child running between trees in twilight with his friend. He ignores the call to dinner; cannot hear anything, cannot see anything but the sound and illumination of his happiness—while we know, we have seen the charts, that he will die of leukemia. At such a moment we can find unbearable the juxtaposition of innocence and suffering to come, the thought that the happiness in question is entirely illusory.... It is hard to have the grand view of the angel at the same time as we have the intimate view of the boy who wants to run and run forever. We have to acknowledge that the child was happy, looking forward to a future that would not be his; we have to say that life itself is beautiful before we talk about outcomes. Everything we taste is snatched from death; our responsibility is to taste it completely. We betray the angel's view because we must. Those we love die, yet we must eat, we must sing, we must love them anyway—that is our job. We may have the angel's view as well as the child's but not instead of it. When we stop singing, it is our time and we too go into the dark.
>
> (Tarrant, 1998: 50)

Once we can accept this dual reality—the truth finally realized by both the little prince and the pilot in our story—we can get to the joy on the other side of it, the tragic beauty of being alive, wheatfields and star-music. The Christian myth together with the layered meaning of Barbara's dreams seem to say that if we consciously, voluntarily, and ritually allow innocence to suffer experience (if we let ourselves be "pruned," so to speak) it will lead to the indwelling of the soul, and then to the "resurrection of the body!" Provided we abide in the vine.

We come back, then, to the idea of two worlds that we started with. In Barbara's situation the "divine" world with its extraterrestrial energies, including the innocent soul-carrying child, had been co-opted *in the service of defense against the traumatic realities of living.* This left a picture just like Freud described: inflation, malignant innocence, infantile omnipotence, neurotic suffering, all organized by a self-care system in order to avoid the impossible suffering of life in reality. But the numinous aura around this core of innocence was not produced by the repression. *The divine child or human/divine soul within us is not an artifact of the defensive process, but the very thing the defensive process is protecting. And it is protecting it because it is sacred—the very core of our aliveness.*

For my patient Barbara, and for all of us, the normal stress of therapy requires that the divine (archetypal) world be freed from its recruitment as a defense, in order to perform its proper function of enlightening her/our earth-bound suffering with its redeeming presence. In the process, our neurotic suffering slowly gets changed—not to everyday misery, as Freud suggested, but into what Wordsworth (2004b: 61) called the "still, sad, music of humanity." We take on a piece of the darkness of the world and carry it. This leads to en-*light*-en-ment. Suddenly there is meaning, joy, and gratitude. A little prince comes into the desert of our lives and says "draw me a sheep."

8

C.G. JUNG'S DIVIDED SELF

Learning to live "between the worlds"

The Spirit of man is a candle of the Lord.
(Proverbs 20:27)

Introduction and links to previous chapters

In the previous chapter we explored the concept of innocence as it appears in romantic poetry, in psychoanalysis, and in a clinical case—all against the backdrop of St. Exupéry's fairy tale, *The Little Prince*. We noted that innocence is usually closely associated with a pristine, uncontaminated, child-like *core of aliveness*—an aliveness that (if we are lucky) we experienced in early infancy, creating and discovering the world in a loving, reciprocal relationship with a mother or caretaker, and later, as children simply at play. Because innocence is so close to our spontaneous, God-given true selves, it seems to be, in the language of Grotstein, "the central element in our spiritual nature." Closely associated with the human soul, it stands for a reality of supreme value at the center of a person's life, no matter what course that life may take. And it usually appears in dreams as the image of a child—perhaps an orphaned child—and sometimes this child "comes trailing clouds of glory" from another world, as Wordsworth said (2004a: 159).

In earlier chapters in this book, we contrasted the normal, healthy situation where innocence is mediated by "good enough" maternal care and slowly accrues experience (a process that leads, according to Winnicott, to "indwelling"), with the traumatic situation where pain is unbearable, and the two worlds that represent whole experience are dissociated, leading to a divided self. When this happens, a pre-traumatic, innocent child part of the psyche is split off by dissociative defenses and becomes encapsulated "on another planet" leading to the schizoid condition—an extreme form of introversion. In its "extra-terrestrial" existence, the child is preserved in a state of suspended animation until such time as it can once again risk a journey to this world.

Such a journey always involves a growing capacity to feel the unexperienced pain that floods into the "space between the worlds" as they come

together. This does not seem to be possible without a witnessing and containing other, nor would it be possible at all without what Wilfred Bion (1962) called the psyche's "alpha function," i.e., the symbol-forming transformations of raw sensory fragments (beta elements) into pictures or images that can be used for thinking and dreaming. For Jung (1953: para. 289) this inner process happens automatically. The unconscious, by its very nature, creates images. That is part of its mytho-poetic function. The resulting symbols—in dreams, art, and fantasy—help in the painful journey from omnipotence to reality, just like the "wheatfields" helped the fox and the little prince to allow the painful experience of coming into relationship (being "tamed"), then saying goodbye.

In the previous chapter, we witnessed the painful and redemptive journey of Barbara, as the strange life-forms on her "other planet" slowly came into relationship with her and descended to earth through her struggle. Parallel to her journey, the little prince in our story eventually was forced to risk an entry into "this world." He had to do this because the destructive process loose on his planet (baobabs) was threatening to ruin everything and he needed a sheep—something only this world could provide.

But the most important reason that the little prince had to leave his planet is that *he needed to live a true human life and die a human death.* To do this he had to give up his sustaining illusion of immortality. That's why he made his sad deal with the snake. He would now die and go "home" from where he came, but he could only do this if he learned how to love first and then say goodbye to what he loved—in other words, to suffer an absolute loss and to learn how to mourn this loss. The pilot went through a similar process viewed from the perspective of his earth-bound existence.

In the following pages I would like to explore this process of the slow transformation of post-traumatic, "extra-terrestrial" innocence, and the incremental incarnation of its spiritual energies, in the life of one of the giant personalities of the twentieth century—C.G. Jung. I think Jung's story needs to be told from the perspective of the "two worlds" we are exploring in this book, partly because without this perspective his life and his theories about the psyche cannot be understood properly. Jung's story starts in the soul-full world of his childhood where, because of a painful disparity between his sensitive inner nature and the environmental provision of his family relationships, a necessary division took place between his private and his public selves. This division caused Jung great pain and loneliness, but it also saved an innocent core of himself that became the center of his later life and authorship. And the "world" to which Jung's core-self had retreated (what he would later call the "collective unconscious") was also filled with spiritual "powers" that it took him the rest of his life to describe. At first these powers terrified him with their darkness, but gradually he came to know their lighter, beneficent side. It was in this subterranean world of his second personality that Jung discovered that his "Spirit" was a "candle of the Lord."

In the process of telling Jung's story, I will take the opportunity in this chapter to address a controversial analysis of Jung's "divided self" by object-relations theorist, D.W. Winnicott. This analysis is contained in Winnicott's notorious review (Winnicott, 1964b) of Jung's autobiography. The attentive reader of this book and my previous writings (Kalsched, 1979, 1981, 1995, 1996, 2005a, 2005b, 2006) will know of my profound indebtedness to Winnicott—his understanding of childhood trauma and its defenses, his differentiation of a true and false self, his emphasis on psycho-somatic indwelling, and his explication of that "transitional space" through which we all come into being—or not. It is hard to overestimate Winnicott's contribution to my theoretical understanding and professional life. However, in his pathologizing analysis of Jung's early life I believe that Winnicott provides us with a half-truth that both misleads us and leaves us stranded in a one-dimensional world of all-too-familiar psychoanalytic reductionism.

As I will try to demonstrate, Winnicott does not really "get" the wholeness of Jung's personality or the depth of his psychological theory because he doesn't get what Jung meant by the religious or mytho-poetic function of the psyche, or how it played a central, life-saving role in Jung's boyhood as a "second world" that vouchsafed his innocence and saved his childhood soul for the rest of his life's journey. Winnicott sees Jung as a *pathologically* divided self—a case of childhood schizophrenia—and believes that Jung's entire later authorship, describing the central archetype of the Self, turned out to be a "blind alley" (Winnicott, 1964b: 483) representing nothing but a "slow and wearisome closing down of a lifetime of splendid endeavor."

This (to me) is a tragic misunderstanding (more accurately a half understanding) of Jung and indeed of all individuals whose traumatic history has *broken them open* to the numinous dimension of the psyche and of life, and for whom this second world offers mytho-poetic nutriment for personality integration and wholeness. It is why much of psychoanalysis, with its insistence on "one world" instead of two, will always only half understand many patients whose trauma history has opened up the mysteries of the inner world as a life-saving resource. Just as we walk on two legs, we live—paradoxically—in two worlds at once. It is surprising that several Jungian analysts whose responses to Winnicott's *Review* are mentioned below, seem to have forgotten this fact also, and are just as pathologizing of Jung's childhood as Winnicott.

Before discussing Winnicott's critique I will outline Jung's personal story to see where Winnicott's analysis fits and where it doesn't.

C.G. Jung's odyssey between the worlds: parallels with *The Little Prince*

Jung saw our human condition, with all of its struggle and suffering, as a spiritual problem as well as a psychological one. Through his own suffering, he came to understand that we were suspended between two domains

of experience—on the one hand, an outer world of material reality, on the other, an inner world through which spiritual energies are glimpsed. Furthermore, for Jung, we have our origins, our roots, in both of these "places." As the New Testament says, we are born of spirit as well as flesh (John 3:6). While this existential fact is true for all people, not everyone has the kind of access to the inner world that Jung did.

In his autobiography, Jung says:

> Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away—an ephemeral apparition.... Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains.
>
> (Jung, 1963: 4)

The idea that our "true life" is invisible and hidden took many years to ripen in the vineyard of Jung's busy life, but eventually it became his life's foundation. Looking back over some 80 or so years of life, he said:

> In the end the only events in my life worth telling are those when the *imperishable* world irrupted into this *transitory* one. That is why I speak chiefly of inner experiences, amongst which I include my dreams and visions.... Recollection of the outward events of my life has largely faded or disappeared. But my encounters with the "other" reality, my bouts with the unconscious, are indelibly engraved upon my memory.
>
> (Jung, 1963: 4–5; emphasis added)

In this passage we see that Jung is privileging those moments when the two worlds are no longer completely separated, but inter-penetrate each other in a way that makes life memorable. Achieving such a balanced inner–outer vision was a lifelong journey. In the beginning, his two worlds seemed incommensurable, and miles apart.

Jung suffered his whole life from the same division between the worlds that we found in our story, *The Little Prince*. There can be little question—given what we know from his autobiography and the recently published *Red Book* (2009)—that Jung suffered from what contemporary psychoanalysis would call "early relational trauma." He was, in his own words, an intensely sensitive and vulnerable little boy, afflicted with a terrible loneliness.

When, at the age of 83, Jung sat down to write his autobiography, he could feel in himself the tremendous *resistance* to revisiting the pain of his early childhood. He described this in a letter to an anonymous friend (Jung, 1975: 408):

> Dear N,
> You must bear with my peculiar mental state. While I am writing this I observe a little demon trying to abscond my words and even my thoughts and turning them over into the rapidly flowing river of images, surging from the mists of the past, portraits of a little boy, bewildered and wondering at the incomprehensibly beautiful and hideously profane and deceitful world.

This bewildered and awe-struck little boy is the subject at the center of the following "beautiful and profane" story.

As a very young child Jung was often overwhelmed by dark mysteries: open graves near the family home where his minister-father officiated at funerals, dream images of man-eating underground phallic worms, dangerous black Jesuits, decapitated ghostly apparitions emanating from his mother's bedroom at night (see Jung, 1963: 6–23). These and other childhood fears drove him into himself, into obsessive ruminations about ultimate affairs like God and death, efforts to understand the mysteries around him, and without help, these ruminations only left him feeling further alienated.

With his parents' marriage threatened when he was only three, and his mother gone to a mental hospital for several months, he felt abandoned and permanently mistrustful of "love" (Jung, 1963: 23). He was unable to speak with anyone about his dark imaginings, about his night terrors, his frightening dreams or obsessive thoughts, so his inner division grew wider. In retrospect, Jung rationalized that he was being initiated into the chthonic secrets of the "underworld":

> What happened then was a kind of burial in the earth, and many years were to pass before I came out again. Today I know that it happened in order to bring the greatest possible amount of light into the darkness. It was an initiation into the realm of darkness. My intellectual life had its unconscious beginnings at that time.
> (Jung, 1963: 15)

What got buried, of course, was Jung's innocence, his passionate, curious, and loving nature and his need for a special other person to talk to about his worries and concerns. Instead he introverted these feelings and became attached to the beauty of nature, to the personified images of his inner landscape. Absent other people who understood, he found in nature his "single rose" and fell in love with it. This created some difficulties because the beauties of his inner world were always threatened by the "beobabs" of destructiveness and self-doubt: " 'My unusualness,' said Jung, 'was gradually beginning to give me the disagreeable, rather uncanny feeling that I must possess repulsive traits of which I was not aware' " (Jung, 1963: 64).

standing his unhappiness and maladjustment in the "real" world.

"I always knew that I was two persons," Jung reports:

> One was the son of my parents, who went to school and was less intelligent, attentive, hard-working, decent, and clean than many other boys. The other was grown up—old, in fact—skeptical, mistrustful, remote from the world of men, but close to nature, the earth, the sun, the moon, the weather, all living creatures, and above all close to the night, to dreams, and to whatever "God" worked directly in him... At such times I knew I was worthy of myself, that I was my true self. As soon as I was alone, I could pass over into this state. I therefore sought the peace and solitude of this "Other," personality No 2.
>
> (Jung, 1963: 45)

The strain between Jung's externally adapted personality, which he called his "No. I," and the mysterious night-world of his "No. 2" personality became much worse when he entered school. His "unusualness" and inward preoccupations often alienated him from his school chums. His friends gave him a nickname, "Father Abraham," which hurt and humiliated him. They thought of him as a poseur and a know-it-all. It made him feel homeless in this world, further depressed and alone:

> The most painful thing of all was the frustration of my attempts to overcome the inner split in myself, my division into two worlds. Again and again events occurred which forced me out of my ordinary, everyday existence into the boundlessness of "God's world."
>
> (Jung, 1963: 72)

Jung's autobiography describes many moments where unbearable levels of shame, humiliation, and rage threatened to overwhelm him, especially among his peers. One in particular shows how he was rescued by the defense of dissociation which, in turn, seems to have opened up the world of his No. 2 personality. The event is described at length in the autobiography (see Jung, 1963: 64–6) and constituted a major trauma of Jung's childhood. Jung had shown genuine interest in a topic assigned by one of his teachers in school. He wrote what he considered a good paper on the subject for his teacher, hoping to be recognized for his efforts with a high mark. But instead the teacher humiliated him in front of his classmates, accusing him of plagiarizing the paper, alleging in effect that he was a

> My grief and rage threatened to get out of control. And then something happened that I had already observed in myself several times before: *there was a sudden inner silence, as though a soundproof door had been closed on a noisy room.* It was as if a mood of cool curiosity came over me, and I asked myself, "What is really going on here? [At moments like these] ... there was always the feeling that something other than myself was involved. It was as though a breath of the great world of stars and endless space had touched me, or as if a spirit had invisibly entered the room—the spirit of one who had long been dead and yet was perpetually present in timelessness until far into the future. Denouements of this sort were wreathed with the halo of a numen.
>
> (Jung, 1963: 65–6; emphasis added)

This description records a moment of dissociation when Jung's unconscious defenses (the "soundproof door") rescued him from unbearable affects that might have otherwise broken his spirit or annihilated him completely (soul murder). Instead, through the gap created by dissociation, an alternative world appeared—the world of his No. 2 personality, "God's world," full of mystical feeling and a sense of "superior" insight. This dispassionate "objective" awareness restored some semblance of self-esteem to the shamed and humiliated boy, albeit at a heavy price. Jung's sensitive and privileged access to his inner world was being placed in the service of defense against unbearable feelings in the inter-personal world ... but for the sake of his soul. Once this happens, constructive protest and repair is less and less likely, relationally. As we saw in Chapter 3, the defense takes on a life of its own.

One of the important ritual activities in Jung's struggle to preserve the innocent core of himself during this turbulent time was the following story, unremembered by him until many years later. It shows interesting parallels with *The Little Prince.*

Jung was ten years old. His alienation from himself and painful loneliness led to an action which was strangely satisfying and yet completely incomprehensible to him at the time. Like all the schoolboys in his class, he had a small, varnished pencil case with a little lock and an accompanying ruler. From the ruler, Jung carved a little manikin about two inches long, and decorated him with a frock coat, top hat, and shiny boots. He sawed him off the ruler and put him into the pencil case, where he made a little bed for him and a blanket from a piece of wool. Inside the pencil case with the little manikin Jung also placed one of his favorite

stones from the Rhine. Secretly, and with great satisfaction, he took the pencil case with its hidden contents to the forbidden attic at the top of the house and placed it on one of the beams, where no-one would ever find it. With the little manikin safe in his secret hiding place, Jung also felt more secure, and the tormenting sense of being at odds with himself was relieved. Thereafter, whenever he was hurt or felt misunderstood he would think of his little manikin with his prettily colored stone. At regular intervals Jung would steal up to the attic for visits with his friend. Each time he would place in the case a little scroll of paper on which he had written something important in a secret language. These "letters" constituted a kind of library for the manikin. Gradually the whole ritual was forgotten, until 25 years later when Jung was working on *Symbols of Transformation*, the watershed work that would spell the final break with Freud.

In reflecting on this remarkable ritual later, Jung made it clear that the little manikin, safely bedded down in his secret place, somehow stood for a sacred core of himself in externalized form. It was, he said, "an inviolable secret which must never be betrayed, for the safety of my life depended on it" (Jung, 1963: 22).

This secreting away of a symbolic representation of his own soul led Jung to realize—reportedly for the first time—that "there are archaic psychic components which have entered the individual psyche without any direct line of tradition" (Jung, 1963: 23). Later amplifying the carved soul-image (see Figures 8.1–8.2), Jung said:

> the manikin was a little cloaked god of the ancient world, a Telesphoros such as stands on the monuments of Asklepios and reads to him from a scroll.... Ultimately the manikin was a kabir, wrapped in his little cloak, hidden in the kista, and provided with a supply of life-force, the oblong black stone.
>
> (Jung, 1963: 23)

Much later, in his seventy-fifth year, while carving his famous stone in front of his house at Bollingen, Jung was "revisited" by Telesphoros. He describes the following spontaneous process:

> Soon something else emerged. I began to see on the front face, in the natural structure of the stone, a small circle, a sort of eye, which looked at me. I chiseled it into the stone and in the center made a tiny homunculus. This corresponds to the "little doll" (pupilla) – yourself – which you see in the pupil of another's eye; a kind of Kabir, or the Telesphoros of Asklepios. Ancient statues show him wearing a hooded cloak and carrying a lantern.... I dedicated a few words to him ... in Greek:
>
> "Time is a child – playing like a child – playing a board game –

Figure 8.1 Asklepios and the hooded Telesphorus reading to him from a scroll.

Figure 8.2 Jung's stone at Bollingen, showing the figure of Telesphorus.

> the kingdom of the child. This is Telesphoros, who roams through the dark regions of this cosmos and glows like a star out of the depths. He points the way to the gates of the sun and the land of dreams."
>
> (Jung, 1963: 227)

Jung continued to elaborate this image on the third face of the stone, facing the lake. Here he let the stone speak for itself:

> I am an orphan, alone; nevertheless I am found everywhere. I am one, but opposed to myself. I am youth and old man at one and the same time. I have known neither father nor mother, because I have had to be fetched out of the deep like a fish, or fell like a

> white stone from heaven. In woods and mountains I roam but I am hidden in the innermost soul of man. I am mortal for everyone, yet I am not touched by the cycle of aeons.
>
> (Jung, 1963: 227)

I have strung these separate elements of Jung's inner dialogue with the "little doll" or "orphaned child" together here in order to illustrate his fidelity to the *sacred spark of the soul* he felt alive in himself—how he conceptualized or imaged it, and its connection to his childhood. Beginning as the completely unconscious act of carving the manikin, Jung gradually was led to see that this little homunculus carried some sort of precious psychological and spiritual significance for him as a person. This child-image "glowed like a star out of the depths" and was "hidden in the innermost soul of man."

It seems to me that Jung had learned, through his own suffering and inwardness, the same lesson that the little prince teaches the pilot as they go in search of a well. They are overcome by the beauty of the night and the desert sky. "The stars are beautiful," says the little prince, "because of a flower you don't see" and "what makes the desert so beautiful," he repeats, "is that it hides a well somewhere" (St. Exupéry, 2000: 68). The pilot suddenly remembers that when he was a little boy, he lived in an old house and a legend was told about how a treasure was buried there. "To be sure," remembered the pilot, "no one was ever able to find the treasure ... but it cast a spell over that whole house. My house hid a secret in the depths of its heart" (St. Exupéry, 2000: 68).

The secret in Jung's heart was his own soul-life, and it was threatened by the traumatic experiences with others that assailed him. His act of carving the little manikin and secreting it away represents his unconscious effort to hide this "treasure" and keep it safe while he went on with his outer life. Often the secrets in the depths of one's heart must be set aside in order to live a well-enough adapted outer life. But the secret contents must never be lost. This would be equivalent to a violation of the sacred spark of life itself—to the loss of one's soul.

Hidden candlesticks

Jung was not alone in his unconscious act of preserving a symbolic representative of his core self in order to go on with his outer life. One of my favorite stories about this kind of ritual soul-saving activity is told by Masud Khan in a paper entitled "Secret as Potential Space" (Khan, 1983). I interrupt Jung's story briefly to tell it here.

Khan describes a patient named Caroline who consulted him after an emotionally devastating abandonment by her husband, after which she had given up all hope of a personal life shared with someone else. After several months of five times per week analysis, Khan's patient began to

leave various items in his waiting room over the weekend—an umbrella, a packet of chocolates, a book, etc. It was as though Caroline was secreting away a part of herself for safe-keeping with her analyst while she went about the rest of her life between sessions. Khan was puzzled by this but always kept the left-behind item to be returned to her the following Monday, without inquiring directly into the meaning of this peculiar "use" of the analytic space.

As the safety and mutuality between Caroline and her analyst increased, the patient remembered an important "secret" event from her childhood, an event that partially explained the waiting-room "deposits." She had never spoken about this before. When she was only three-and-a-half years old, there occurred a major rupture in her life—one of obviously traumatic import. Her mother gave birth to twins after a toxemic pregnancy and soon fell into a post-partum depression rendering her incapable of continuing her active role in the running of the family. Her depression worsened and a nurse was hired. The whole climate in the home changed and little Caroline literally "lost" her childhood.

At that crucial time the patient had done something that was incomprehensible to her adult self. She had taken two silver candlesticks from the dining room and buried them in the garden, telling no-one. These candlesticks were an expensive item and their loss sent everyone into a tizzy. There was much searching around for them; the police were called and eventually the insurance company paid for their loss. A few months later, the parents sold their house to some friends and moved to another city.

Years passed, with the mother's condition slowly improving. Then one day when Caroline was nine years old, the family took their first vacation in a long time. They returned to the city where Caroline was born and visited their old friends in the original family home. While everyone was having tea, Caroline went out into the garden, dug up the candlesticks and returned them to her parents. At that point, according to Caroline "real Hell broke loose and my father gave me a big thrashing" (Khan, 1983: 102).

In explanation of his patient's story, Khan says:

> the candlesticks symbolized all the good nourishing experiences of her infancy and early childhood from good-enough mothering.... The burying of the candlesticks created a secret where she could continue in suspended animation a part of her that she could no longer live and share with her parents, especially the mother. The secret encapsulated her own absent self.
>
> (Khan, 1983: 103)

To Khan's interpretation we would want to add that Caroline's secret encapsulated something *more* than her own "absent self." It encapsulated something of her own spontaneous, innocent, and animated absent self—

the ensouled part of her that could no longer go on living in external reality but found an alternative reality in which it could continue its life in the limbo of "suspended animation." Remaining unconscious until six years later, Caroline recovered the awareness of her earlier symbolic action, together with the actual candlesticks, at a time when life *between the worlds* seemed possible again.

The return of Caroline's soul from its suspended animation through the ritual act of burying (then recovering) the candlesticks reportedly led to a much healthier nine-year-old girl. From the age of three-and-a-half to nine (the time she lived in "suspended animation"), Caroline had suffered from a variety of psychosomatic illnesses, keeping her out of school and requiring frequent periods of depressive withdrawal. Now she was able to resume her previously buoyant but interrupted childhood. In her later analysis, the enactment of hiding things within the analytic space and her subsequent recovery of the early memory led to a newly animated young adult patient. Khan remarks:

> From this point onwards her mode of communicating in the session changed. I was surprised to witness in her a joyous capacity to recall and narrate, with a sparkling vividness, experiences from all areas and phases of her life.
>
> (Khan, 1983: 104)

Jung's story, continued

Just like Khan's patient Caroline, the secret "in the depths of Jung's heart" had to be set aside as he moved into his adolescent years and began to prepare for his professional life.

As Jung now entered university life, his No. 1 personality emerged more and more strongly and No. 2 receded into the background, along with the memories of his childhood pain. No longer plagued with chronic self-doubt and insecurity, Jung threw himself quite consciously into his outer life: his studies and his social life.

He joined a fraternity and gave several lectures on theological and psychological subjects (see Jung, 1983: 33–47) where his inner interests (No. 2) could find a respectable place in the world of his scientific studies (No. 1). He was popular, animated, and fun to be around. He began to pursue a career in medicine. I say "career" because at this point Jung still did not know that he had a "vocation," or a "calling" involving his inner life. That "call" came as he was preparing for his state medical examination, and it is an important event in Jung's biography because it was one moment when his long forgotten No. 2 personality tapped him on the shoulder once again.

As part of his preparation, Jung had to read a textbook on psychiatry by Kraft-Ebbing. In those days, psychiatry was a subspecialty of medicine that

was held in contempt by other practitioners. The main thing missing for Jung was an approach that would regard human beings as a whole (two worlds), including pathological variations. Suddenly Jung came across a passage by Kraft-Ebbing that described the psychoses as "diseases of the personality." His heart began to pound. In a flash of illumination, he realized that his only goal now must be psychiatry. Here he could study both scientific (No. 1) and spiritual (No. 2) facts. The two currents of his interest could "flow together and in a united stream dig their own bed" (Jung, 1983: 109).

Jung's friends all thought he was crazy. They were intensely disappointed with him. His old wound of feeling alienated and an outsider began to ache again. But his decision stood. "This confident feeling that I was a 'united double nature' carried me as if on a magical wave through the examination, in which I came out at the top" (Jung, 1983: 109).

Jung had come home to himself and to a unity in his heretofore divided self. His inner and outer worlds were now integrated again as a "united double nature" and the result was his newfound enthusiasm for life and for his profession. The imperishable world of spirit, and the transitory world of matter were now joined into one stream, and the energy released for Jung's life was striking. Jung now threw himself into his psychiatric studies, graduating at the top of his class at the age of 25. He joined the staff and teaching faculty at the Burgholzli Mental Hospital, and began assisting its distinguished director, Dr. Med. Eugen Bleuler. He read voluminously and began research studies on his patients. He was especially interested in their inner imaginal lives, but he applied exacting scientific methods (word association experiments) in order to explore these. He met and married Emma Rauschenbach in 1903 and began to assist in the design of a grand home on Lake Zurich to receive their growing family. His work began to be published and brought him to the attention of Freud's Vienna circle (see Bair, 2003: 55ff.).

The dialectic of Jung's two worlds in relation to Freud and psychoanalysis

After reading Freud's monumental *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and having begun a correspondence with him, Jung was invited to Vienna in 1907, when he finally met the master himself. The two men spoke without interruption for 13 hours—from 1:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. (see Jung, 1963: 149).

Much later, in an interview with Kurt Eissler, Jung is reported to have said of this meeting: "A world happened then ... [it was like giving birth]. At birth everything is already there! In reality there is no time! Time is nothing! That's what one realizes on such occasions. Those are ... moments, that are completely timeless" (reported in Bair, 2003: 117).

However, even in their mutual enthusiasm about that interview, there were signs of the differences that would eventually drive Jung and Freud apart. And these differences had to do with Jung's commitment to his "two worlds"—to a spiritual as well as the material or biological understanding. When Jung first read Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, what caught his attention was what Freud called "mechanisms of repression" which Freud claimed accounted for the weird symbolic "disguises" of dreams. Jung had previously encountered similar interruptions, disguises, and reaction-time delays in patients' responses to stimulus words in the word association test when some "psychic lesion or conflict" (Jung, 1963: 147) was touched. So he had discovered a similar "mechanism."

But the troubling question for Jung was: "What was the psychic lesion or conflict that led to the disruption in psychological process?" For Freud, the content of all repression was some forbidden sexual wish or impulse (later, aggression was added). Jung's experience was different. It seemed to him that many patients were just as repressed or defended because of painful social experiences, or traumatic life-events, self-esteem injuries, etc. Many of his patients (including himself) had retreated into an alternative world on account of such injuries and what they were running from was not always some sexual content. Moreover, the symbolic content of their alternative inner worlds did not seem to Jung to be adequately accounted for as disguises of a sexual wish. These patients were certainly neurotic and highly defended (full of "complexes" in Jung's language), but their inner lives—while undoubtedly full of psychic suffering—were often rich and beautiful, poetic and even "spiritual," not just derivatives of sexual repression.

When Jung presented such cases to Freud, his mentor always suspected the "spiritual" content as disguised sexuality or "psychosexuality." Jung could not find either a resonance or an adequate understanding, in Freud's psychosexual theory for his own, or his patients' painful and admittedly defended inner worlds—much less for those "mystical" sensibilities that seemed to sustain them within these worlds. Jung was also interested in what became known as "extra-sensory perception" (ESP) and he wanted to hear from Freud what he thought about parapsychological phenomena and precognition (Bair, 2003: 116). Freud tended to dismiss such interests with his usual "hermeneutic of suspicion." (Moreover, Freud had implored Jung to never give up the sexual theory lest the "black tide of occultism" take over psychoanalysis.)

Nonetheless, the rapport that developed between the two men was much stronger than their disagreements and set the stage for a collaboration and a genuine friendship that gave birth to the psychoanalytic movement over the next five years. The record of their collaboration, and the incredible accomplishments of the two men working together, is recorded in Bill McGuire's *The Freud/Jung Letters* (1974), which records one of the most extraordinary collaborations in the history of Western thought. In

many respects it embodies an intellectual/spiritual wrestling match over the question: "One world or two?"

According to Peter Homans (1989: 29ff.), the Freud–Jung relationship rapidly developed into one of mutual merger and idealization, with strong narcissistic features for both men. Although Jung continued to have misgivings about Freud's sexual theory, any conflicts with his more "spiritual" orientation were set aside during the building phase of their collaboration. Freud found in Jung a brilliant "son" and "heir" for his movement and Jung found in Freud the father and mentor he never had. The following two letters attest to this growing intimacy.

In September of 1907, Jung was in Amsterdam, about to give a lecture in defense of Freud's ideas, and Freud was very grateful. He wrote:

> it strikes me as almost cowardly that [you should be lecturing about my ideas] and I should meanwhile be looking for mushrooms in the woods!... Now of all times I wish I were with you, taking pleasure in no longer being alone and, if you are in need of encouragement, telling you about my long years of honourable but painful solitude, which began after I cast my first glance into the new world, about the indifference and incomprehension of my closest friends, about the terrifying moments when I myself thought I had gone astray and was wondering how I might still make my misled life useful to my family, about my slowly growing conviction, which fastened itself to the interpretation of dreams as to a rock in a stormy sea, and about the serene certainty which finally took possession of me and bade me wait until a voice from the unknown multitude should answer mine. That voice was yours.
>
> (McGuire, 1974: 82)

In October, Jung wrote back a kind of confession:

> Your last two letters contain references to my laziness in writing. I certainly owe you an explanation.... Actually—and I confess this to you with a struggle—I have a boundless admiration for you both as a man and a researcher, and I bear you no conscious grudge. So the "self-preservation complex" does not come from there; it is rather that my veneration of you has something of the character of a "religious" crush. Though it does not really bother me, I still feel it is disgusting and ridiculous because of its undeniable erotic undertone. This abominable feeling comes from the fact that as a boy I was the victim of a sexual assault by a man I once worshipped.
>
> (McGuire, 1974: 95)

And then, a few days later:

> I am suffering all the agonies of a patient in analysis, riddling myself with every conceivable fear about the possible consequences of my confession.
>
> (McGuire, 1974: 95)

As far as we know, Freud did not respond directly to Jung's "confession" but he did respond to Jung's description of his "religious" crush:

> a transference on a religious basis would strike me as most disastrous; it could end only in apostasy, thanks to the universal human tendency to keep making new prints of the clichés we bear within us. I shall do my best to show you that I am unfit to be an object of worship.
>
> (McGuire, 1974: 98)

Nonetheless, Jung's two worlds had come together around the image of Sigmund Freud, and as a "united double nature" he was thriving. The collaboration continued with deepening friendship and rapport, notwithstanding Jung's "occult" interests and Freud's frustrations with his independent manner. But then Jung's spiritual enthusiasms took a distressingly florid turn. Freud had proposed that psychoanalysis associate itself with a local ethical fraternity. He thought this might protect analysis from the authoritarian pressures he felt sure would come from the state or the Church. Jung had nothing but contempt for such associations and, in a florid exposure of his No. 2 personality, he wrote back:

> Do you think this Fraternity could have any practical use?
>
> I imagine a far finer and more comprehensive task for psychoanalysis than alliance with an ethical fraternity. I think we must give it time to infiltrate into people from many centers, to revivify among intellectuals a feeling for symbol and myth, ever so gently to transform Christ back into the soothsaying god of the vine, which he was, and in this way absorb those ecstatic instinctual forces of Christianity for the one purpose of making the cult and sacred myth what they once were—a drunken feast of joy where man regained the ethos and holiness of an animal. That was the beauty and purpose of classical religion, which from God knows what temporary biological needs has turned into a Misery Institute. Yet what infinite rapture and wantonness lie dormant in our religion, waiting to be led back to their true destination! A genuine and proper ethical development cannot abandon Christianity but must grow up within it, must bring to fruition its hymn of love, the agony and ecstasy over the dying and resurgent god, the mystic power of the wine, the awesome

> anthropophagy of the Last Supper—only this ethical development can serve the vital forces of religion.
>
> (McGuire, 1974: 293–4)

Freud was alarmed and his reply was immediate:

> in you the tempest rages; it comes to me as distant thunder ... you mustn't regard me as the founder of a religion. My intentions are not so far reaching ... I am not thinking of a substitute for religion; this need must be sublimated.
>
> (McGuire, 1974: 295)

Jung's letter had clearly bordered on outright mania—a classic case of what he later warned against in terms of identification with archetypal contents from the collective layer of the psyche, i.e., *ego inflation*. Jung's "united double nature" conspired to push him to such idealistic flights, and it both amused and worried his senior mentor, Freud.

It was only two years after this exchange that the mutual rapport between the two men finally and painfully broke down completely. The above correspondence gives some sense of how far it had to fall. The main factor around which their conflict reached a flash-point was Jung's insistent desire to include a religious and mytho-poetic dimension in the psychoanalytic theory that was evolving. His final efforts in that direction—each one taken with fear and trepidation about Freud's disapproval—came in his Fordham University lectures in September of 1912 (see Jung, 1912a) with his revision of the libido theory. Despite Jung's hope that his revisioning of psychoanalysis from within would not be seen as a split, the correspondence grew ugly. Freud began to accuse Jung of acting out his father complex. Jung accused Freud of neurosis. The inevitable schism finally came. In January of 1913, Freud wrote: "I propose that we abandon our personal relations entirely. I shall lose nothing by it, for my only emotional tie with you has long been a thin thread—the lingering effect of past disappointments" (McGuire, 1974: 539).

Jung replied on a postcard: "I accede to your wish that we abandon our personal relations, for I never thrust my friendship on anyone. You yourself are the best judge of what this moment means to you. 'The rest is silence'" (McGuire, 1974: 540).

Jung was crushed and "homeless" once again. Freud had been for him a major "transformational object" (Bollas, 1987: 13–29) and now he was gone. Jung descended into a deep depression—his personal "night sea journey" or *nekyia*. He had been swept up in the psychoanalytic movement for five fruitful years, and had found therein a professional playground for his "united double nature." He had developed a world-wide reputation; was president of the psychoanalytic movement and was riding high on what he later came to describe (Jung, 2009) as the "spirit of the times."

But now he suffered the mockery of colleagues who contemptuously criticized his new ideas and "spiritual innovations." He became a pariah in the movement that he had helped initiate and was cast out by the father and mentor who he so esteemed. His life came apart and he was utterly lost. He went back to his solitude, his personal journals (which he had discontinued in 1902), and to the solitude and loneliness of the No. 2 personality he had known so well as a boy.

A period of uncertainty and disorientation began for Jung. These feelings were vaguely familiar from his childhood, so he methodically went over his childhood memories to try to understand what he was experiencing (see Jung, 1963: 173). This is when the memory of his secret ritual with the little manikin came back to him. To focus his inner search, Jung returned to some of the idle games he had played as a boy, playing along the lake shore and building small villages with stones. This child-like play served as a rite of entry for Jung into the abandoned mytho-poetic psyche of his youth. Slowly he was able to grasp the fantasies that were emerging inside himself. At night he wrote these down in what he called his black books, slowly transcribing them into the *Red Book.*

In October of 1913 Jung was overcome with violent visions and dreams of an apocalyptic flood that swept over Europe and killed thousands and thousands of people. He saw rivers of blood. He thought he was going mad. Then there were repeated dreams of a terrible cold that descended from space in the middle of the summer, freezing and killing every green living thing (Jung, 2009: 231). Faithfully he wrote down his dreams and fantasies every night, trying desperately to understand his regression into the depths of the unconscious. He had lost his soul and his fears of insanity were strong. He knew well the signs of possible psychosis in these apocalyptic visions.

Referring back to this tormented time, Jung once reported to Mircea Eliade:

> As a psychiatrist I became worried, wondering if I was not on the way to "doing a schizophrenia," as we said in the language of those days.... I was just preparing a lecture on schizophrenia to be delivered at a congress in Aberdeen and I kept saying to myself: "I'll be speaking of myself! Very likely I'll go mad after reading out this paper." The congress was to take place in July 1914—exactly the same period when I saw myself in my three dreams voyaging on the Southern seas. On July 31st, immediately after my lecture, I learned from the newspapers that war had broken out. Finally I understood. And when I disembarked in Holland on the next day, nobody was happier than I. Now I was sure that no schizophrenia was threatening me. I understood that my dreams and my visions came to me from the subsoil of the collective unconscious. What remained for me to do now was to deepen and

validate this discovery. And that is what I have been trying to do for forty years.

(Jung, 1952b: 233–4)

Jung's conclusion in 1914, that his inner turmoil wasn't really personal but that he was "picking up" outer violence in the collective, seems like one of those half-truths—the reverse of which we will find in Winnicott's analysis below. From the standpoint of a balanced or binocular two-worldly (inner/outer) vision, it seems highly suspect, grandiose, and one-sided—a likely avoidance of the emotional devastation and self-directed violence that was set loose inside himself by Freud's abandonment and by his dissociation of these feelings. Jung never did acknowledge his great grief at losing Freud or his great anger at having been mistreated by him and his faithful band of followers—aggression that flooded him from inside, with no place to put it—no relationship to contain it. By removing his agony from the personal to the collective, Jung gave a big sigh of relief, but this analytic "sleight of hand" left him with a lot of inner work to do if he was ever to come to terms with the emotional catastrophe that had befallen him, and with the destructive "beobabs" that were proliferating in his inner world.

This work (again for him always an inward struggle) began when, in the middle of all his agony, and filled with emptiness and longing, one dark night in 1913 he seized his pen and began writing:

> "Meine Seele, meine Seele, wo bist Du!?" My soul, my soul, where are you?
>
> (Jung, 2009: 232)

> Do you hear me? I call you ... are you there? I have returned I am here again ... Do you still know me? ... Give me your hand, my almost forgotten soul. How warm the joy at seeing you again ... you long disavowed soul. Life has led me back to you.
>
> (Jung, 2009: 232)

> I wandered for many years, so long that I forgot that I possessed a soul.... I belonged to men and things. [I had accomplished all my ambitions and had every happiness] but I did not belong to myself. I had to become aware that I had lost my soul.
>
> (Jung, 2009: 233)

Jung spent many lonely nights in his study attending to his bleak inner world and writing down the fantasies and visionary encounters with the archaic powers that he met in his inner landscape. At first there were only apocalyptic visions and despair. Then, slowly, his struggle was rewarded by some of the positive, life-enhancing energies of that other world known to

him earlier as his No. 2 personality. At the center of these emerging dreams and fantasies, Jung met a child—a child that he recognized as an image of his own soul. *Liber Primus*, the first part of the *Red Book*, begins and ends with the image of a luminous child.

"Who are you child," Jung asks,

> My dreams have represented you as a child and as a maiden. I am ignorant of your mystery. Forgive me if I speak as in a dream, like a drunkard—are you God? Is God a child, a maiden? Forgive me if I babble. No one else hears me. I speak to you quietly ... and you know that my heart twists in pain from the wound, whose darkness delivers speeches full of mockery.
>
> (Jung, 2009: 233)

> How strange it sounds to me to call you a child, you who still hold the all-without-end in your hand. I went on the way of the day, and you went invisibly with me.... You upheld my belief, when I was alone and near despair. At every decisive moment you let me believe in myself.
>
> (Jung, 2009: 233)

> I must learn that the dregs of my thought, my dreams, are the speech of my soul. I must carry them in my heart, and go back and forth over them in my mind, like the words of the person dearest to me. Dreams are the guiding words of the soul. Why should I henceforth not love my dreams and not make their riddling images into objects of my daily consideration.
>
> (Jung, 2009: 233)

> The spirit of the depths taught me that my life is encompassed by the divine child. From his hand everything unexpected came to me, everything living. This child is what I feel as an eternally springing youth in me.
>
> (Jung, 2009: 234)

> I had to recognize and accept that my soul is a child and that my God in my soul is a child.
>
> (Jung, 2009: 244)

> My God is a child, so [no] wonder that the spirit of this time in me is incensed to mockery and scorn. Every step closer to my soul excites the scornful laughter of my devils, those cowardly ear-whisperers and poison-mixers.
>
> (Jung, 2009: 234)

Despite the mockery from his own inner voices and from his prior friends in the psychoanalytic movement, Jung had come home to that part of himself that had sustained him as a boy—to his deeper, truer, God-given self—to his primal innocence and soul-life. Through his newfound devotion to this inner world and to his patients' as well, Jung would come to realize that we are all born between two worlds or levels of reality and that we participate in both—on the one hand, an outer world of material reality dominated by the "spirit of the times," on the other, an inner world in which spiritual realities inhere, "the spirit of the depths." We have our origins in both these "places." We are citizens of both realms (see the Heschel epigraph in the Introduction).

In addition, Jung began to see that the soul is the ligament or connection between these worlds. And this idea of the soul as a *relationship* between two worlds is why the image of the part-human, part-divine "child" which seemed to represent the soul in Jung's dreams was so powerful for him. He had grown up in a Christian home, his father a minister. But he had never been able to believe anything about the irrational dogmas of the Christian Church and its spiritual avatar, Jesus Christ. A child born of a virgin with a spiritual father and a human mother? What a preposterous idea, Jung thought. But wait a minute. What if this image, this myth of dual origins, was a profound out-picturing of the two worlds that define the dialectic of the soul and personified the relationship between these worlds? What if this symbolism gave archetypal expression not to a literal truth about the historical Jesus, but rather expressed a symbolic truth about a divine/human soul-life in the interiority of every person? This symbolic understanding of his Christian background is what began to dawn on Jung as he wrote down his fantasies in the *Red Book*.

The Christian myth also helped Jung with the most difficult part of his dark passage through the underworld. He realized he would not be visited by his inner child until he accepted his ego's total defeat, his utter brokenness, his "crucifixion." Just like the pilot in St. Exupéry's story had crashed his plane in the desert, Jung had crashed his psychoanalytic career into a desert of isolation and despair. What brought his little prince down into this world was Jung's willingness to look inward and to surrender his previous identifications—all that he "knew" of his previous professional identity. The Christian story helped him in making this sacrifice. In the *Red Book*, Jung says:

> I saw the death of Christ and I saw his lament; I felt the agony of his dying, of the great dying. I saw a new God, a child [emerging out of this suffering] ... whose will is simple, and beyond conflict ... I must become a Christ. I am made into Christ, I must suffer it. Thus the redeeming blood flows. Through the self-sacrifice my pleasure is changed and goes above into its higher principle. Love is sighted.
>
> (Jung, 2009: 254)

The image of the suffering and dying Christ gave Jung an image to help him with his own grief at this time, and the fact that he had to suffer it voluntarily and consciously. He was living the truth of Helen Luke's statement "true suffering belongs to innocence, not guilt" (Luke, 1995: 60). Christ, he realized, is a symbol of the "innocent one" who must nonetheless suffer the agony of unmediated (i.e., traumatic), experience—on the way to becoming completely human.

Much later, in a 1937 talk to the Analytical Psychology Club of New York Jung spoke *knowingly* about what Christ had experienced. In some informal remarks after dinner he said:

> the utter failure came at the crucifixion in the tragic words "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" If you want to understand the full tragedy of those words you must realize that they meant that Christ saw that his whole life, sincerely devoted to the truth according to his best conviction, had really been a terrible illusion. He had lived his life absolutely devotedly to its full and had made his honest experiment, but ... on the cross his mission deserted him. But because he had lived so fully and devotedly, he won through to the resurrection body.
>
> We all must do just what Christ did. We must make our experiment. We must make mistakes. We must live out our own vision of life. When we live like this we know Christ as a brother and God indeed becomes man, i.e., God becomes man in ourselves.
>
> (Jung, 1937)

Later, Jung understood the divine child image as a reconciling symbol or "third" reality that emerges from the held tension of opposites, the *transcendent function.* Hence the "divinity" of the child, its transcendence. Conscious suffering brings the God down into this world—innocence acquiring experience. That's the regressive part, a conscious sacrifice. But the sacrifice is not just a net loss, leading as Freud said to "everyday misery." Conscious suffering also elevates the human to its "divinity." That's the progressive part, the part the pilot learns from the little prince in our earlier story. Everything beautiful about this life contains a secret, something invisible and sacred in the depths of its heart, something worth living and dying for, a little manikin hiding in the attic, candlesticks in a garden, a little prince hiding on another planet.

Overview of Jung's life story

In the foregoing account, we can see Jung's early traumatic division and the slow, incremental process through which his healing came about, with more help from his dreams and inner work than from any outer person

(that we know of). Like all trauma survivors, his soul was threatened with annihilation. It needed to be hidden and protected and his defenses (what I have called the self-care system) made this possible through the powerful agencies of "another world"—albeit at great cost in his feelings of alienation and loneliness.

But the world into which Jung's soul/child disappeared was not just oblivion or psychic numbness, as contemporary dissociation theory might predict. It was an incomparably beautiful—yet terrifying and profane—world populated with ambivalent spiritual powers. And, Jung discovered, if one kept faith in a dialogue with these powers (through dreams and active imagination) it slowly became apparent that they had a special intention with respect to the soul. As Jung attended his dreams over this period, he began to see that the "dream-maker" seemed to want the soul/child to have a place in "this" world—to incarnate and live its dual destiny here-and-now—despite the great pain, suffering, and sacrifice that this integration of the two worlds would bring.

The idea that we are divine before we are human—that our omnipotence (and narcissism) must be transformed by reality, or that ego–Self identity must be dissolved in the interest of grounded life in the body—these developmental realities explain why Jung was so preoccupied with the Christ-image. Christ was the innocent one (free of sin because part-divine) who volunteered to be crucified (to become human) and *to have his God-identified ego broken and disillusioned.* He was betrayed and forsaken by His heavenly Father. The myth says that by accepting this willingly and *consciously* he was able symbolically to find his way to new life (resurrection). Jung realized that such disillusionment lay ahead for himself and his heroic (inflated) ego. As he wrote the *Red Book,* he realized there was no escaping his own crucifixion.

Jung's statement in the *Red Book* (and in other private writings) that "I must become a Christ.... I must suffer it," has been widely misinterpreted by people such as Richard Noll to mean that Jung was identified with Christ and thought he was establishing a new religion (Noll, 1994). While it seems Jung *was* inclined to manic flights of inflated rhetoric around his enthusiasms for religion (see the letter to Freud above), he was also painfully aware of his grandiose tendencies.

The following letter makes this poignantly clear. In 1959, almost 50 years after his famous "inflated" letter to Freud about psychoanalysis as a religion, one of Jung's students reminded Jung of that letter and quoted the enthusiastic passages back to him. Jung replied:

> Best thanks for the quotation from that accursed correspondence. For me it is an unfortunately inexpugnable reminder of the incredible folly that filled the days of my youth. The journey from cloud-cuckoo-land back to reality lasted a long time. In my case Pilgrim's Progress consisted in my having to climb down a

thousand ladders until I could reach out my hand to the little clod of earth that I am.

(Jung, 1973: 19)

From "cloud-cuckoo-land" to "the little clod of earth that I am." One cannot imagine a more honest, humble (from *humus*, earth) acknowledgment of the disillusionment and deflation that Jung endured. We might add that this was also a loss of innocence, as Jung's divine child—his little prince—came to earth and, purged of its infantile omnipotence, revealed itself for what it was symbolically, an image of the spark of individuality in every person. As a result, Jung's life, just like the pilot in St. Exupéry's story, was renewed. Jung had been split in two by archaic defenses. The spiritual world had come to his rescue and saved his childhood soul, bathing it in "the mysteries." But the soul had not yet realized itself as a function of relationship between the worlds, because it had not yet risked its omnipotence in a suffering descent.

Finally Jung surrendered his ego's identity with the spirit world and, through this "crucifixion" came to appreciate his human—all-too-human—reality as "the little clod of earth" that he was. The result was great grief and suffering, followed by "wheatfields" and the great beauty and depth of that intermediate reality that shimmers with life, both within and without. As John Tarrant (1998: 49) once said "if we don't allow ourselves to be seduced by existence, there is no place for the fingers of eternity to seize us." Jung was seduced by existence, then fell apart, and finally was seized by the fingers of eternity once again. His life, as he has revealed it to us in all its suffering, is a beautiful paradigm of what lies ahead for us in our own "Pilgrim's Progress."

Winnicott's review of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*

Having framed Jung's odyssey between the worlds of matter and spirit, and having drawn parallels between his suffering experience and the suffering depicted in *The Little Prince*, I would now like to summarize and then evaluate Winnicott's famous (1964b) "Review" of Jung's autobiography. This review—which alleges that Jung was a "recovered case of childhood schizophrenia" (1964b: 483)—has created quite a stir within the Jungian world.

As Renos Papadopoulos (1992: 310) noted, "Despite his great effort to be objective and non-judgmental [Winnicott's review] did not please many Jungians, who saw it as either insulting or patronizing." My own view is that beyond "insulting" and "patronizing" is the fact that Winnicott simply does not understand *psychic reality* as Jung finally came to appreciate it, i.e., as involving a subjectively real, ineffable, mytho-poetic "second world" based upon contents that are collective, pre-personal, and daimonic. Without the binocular vision of two worlds Winnicott's reductive analysis of Jung's

trans-personal and collective experiences *as nothing but defensive compensations or displacements* for traumatic derailments with his mother, cannot help but be one-sided.

In keeping with this limitation, Jeffrey Morey raises questions about whether an object-relational perspective (with its personalistic understanding of the unconscious) can ever adequately encompass or understand Jung's experience of the psyche's immateriality and collective depths. He finds Winnicott's diagnosis of childhood schizophrenia "untenable" and a "misdiagnosis" (Morey, 2005: 340, 346). Similarly, David Sedgwick focuses on the major dream that Winnicott had following his process of writing the review—a dream that suggests Winnicott had the same problems with hostility that he projected onto Jung. He avers that despite Winnicott's effort to be fair, he "still damns the half-mad Jung with faint praise" (Sedgwick, 2008: 553) and "uses him rather ruthlessly for his own purposes" (Sedgwick, 2008: 554).

Strangely enough, other Jungian analysts align themselves with Winnicott's reductive analysis. Jeffrey Satinover (1985) alleges that Jung never grieved for his lost objects (especially Freud) and turned away from the pain of these losses into a kind of Gnostic spirituality as a defense. While questioning the diagnostic term "childhood schizophrenia," Satinover prefers to say that Jung suffered from a "psychotic character structure" (Satinover, 1985: 64).

Finally, Jungian analyst William Meredith-Owen tries to be fair to Jung's extraordinary "genius" and "creativity" on the one hand, while exploring his "pathology" on the other. He agrees with Winnicott that Jung's early failed attachment with his mother left him with "a blank and potentially psychotic core" (Meredith-Owen, 2011: 674). Like Satinover, Meredith-Owen conceives of Jung's mytho-poetic discoveries in the world of his No. 2 personality as displacements or compensations for the emotionally missing mother—a "patched breast" to cover the "psychic hole" (Meredith-Owen, 2011: 688).

In the following exploration of Winnicott's review, I am less interested in the issue of fairness to Jung or proper psychiatric diagnosis, than I am in pointing out that without a binocular vision of psychological life in general, any analysis of Jung's life is bound to be one-sided and incomplete.

Winnicott (and his Jungian sympathizers) cannot help but discount Jung's retreat into the spiritual world because they can see (accurately I believe) that *this retreat happened partially as a defensive reaction to early trauma.* I agree with this perception. However, it is one thing to acknowledge the *use* of a spiritual world in the service of defense, and another to conclude that the inner world is only an *artifact of a defensive process emerging from early trauma in object relations.* Such reductionism makes all trans-personal processes in the psyche *derivative* of failed personal relationships, i.e., it reduces the psyche to "one world," i.e., the outer world. It also

conveniently bypasses the question "what are the defenses defending?" We have witnessed in previous chapters how the saving and protection of a vital core of selfhood seems to be the "goal" of what I have called the self-care system.

I have already said that when Jung's ego fell through the crack created by dissociation, he fell into a world already there to catch him—a world that eventually saved his soul. What if (for the sake of argument) we imagined that this mytho-poetic dimension of human experience was just as primary, just as foundational, as the infant–mother relational world through which it is (usually) transformed? How would this change the way we viewed childhood experience? What if this "second space" (Milosz) provided the human soul (unable to suffer its way to embodied existence in the inter-personal world because of trauma) both a refuge and a way of returning through mytho-poetic, cultural, artistic, and symbolic vehicles, to this world? What if there were two avenues through which we might develop into healthy, creative individuals in this life, not just one? What if some survivors of early trauma (like Jung) were given a privileged look into this second space and were able to *use* it to eventually return to a full life "between the worlds" once again?

Winnicott does admit that Jung was able to use his unusual creative capacities to heal himself of his childhood psychosis, but then says dismissively "but of course self-healing is not the same as resolution by analysis" (Winnicott, 1964b: 484). By this statement Winnicott means something very specific about how analysis heals severe early trauma; namely, that the traumatized infant has lived through a "breakdown" followed by primitive defenses and that this breakdown will have to be repeated in the transference, this time within the area of omnipotence, so that a new beginning can be made (see Winnicott, 1974). This will require a regression to the early infantile dependency now re-staged within the transference. Anything short of this, according to Winnicott, is only a "partial cure" within a basically psychotic character structure. We will see whether Jung's early life fits this description.

Much of Jung's description of his divided self credits "God's world" with having virtually saved his life. This description was obviously difficult for Winnicott to take at face value and he tended to discount it. In our field of psychoanalysis, this bias goes all the way back to Freud, whose intolerance for mystical feeling-states and "occult" matters was legendary. A classic description of Freud's attitude toward these states is found in his correspondence with his friend Romain Rolland, who had taken issue with Freud's reduction of all mystical or religious feelings to infantile illusion. Describing his correspondence with Rolland in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud explained:

> My friend ... was sorry I had not properly appreciated the true source of religious sentiments. This, he says, consists in a peculiar

> feeling, which he himself is never without, which he finds confirmed by many others, and which he may suppose is present in millions of people. It is a feeling which he would like to call a sensation of "eternity," a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded—as it were, "oceanic." ... The views expressed by the friend whom I so much honour ... caused me no small difficulty. I cannot discover this "oceanic" feeling in myself.... If I have understood my friend rightly ... it is a feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole.
>
> (Freud, 1930: 64–6)

Freud is describing his friend's access to mystical experience and acknowledging that he is without such feeling.[1] By contrast, Jung's autobiography is filled with such experiences and it is doubtful whether Winnicott—any more than Freud—could have understood their soul-saving value to him. Winnicott was completely identified with the *infant–mother dyad as the ground of all personality development.* This was his *numinous image*—where the *mystery* lay for Winnicott. He simply could not imagine that contents from "beyond" this personal relationship might enter the psyche and become a resource for the child's evolving life. Such words as "archetypal" or "trans-personal" (which he heard from his friend Michael Fordham in the British Medical Society) had vexed Winnicott for years and one gets the impression that such language actually irritated him.

Speaking at a symposium on countertransference, he complained that

> some of the [Jungian] terms ... are not of any value to me.... I refer to: transpersonal, transpersonal unconscious, transpersonal analytic ideal, archetypal, the contra-sexual components of the psyche, the animus and anima, animus–anima conjunction. I cannot be communicated with in this language.
>
> (Winnicott, 1960b: 159)

Such a categorical dismissal of language that attempts to describe the psyche's pre-personal depths, mysterious meanings, and mytho-poetic affects and image-structures annihilates any conversation from the beginning, so it is no wonder that there have been misunderstandings between contemporary psychoanalysis and Jungian thought.

Winnicott's allegations about Jung's psychopathology

What, then, *is* Winnicott saying in his controversial *Review*? There are three main areas to which he directs his attention: (1) Jung's alleged failure to achieve "unit status" and hence a "place for his unconscious"; (2) Jung's lifelong, and relatively futile, search for a "self" with which to "know"; and

finally (3) Jung's psychotic defenses (dissociation instead of repression) and their tragic impact on his life.

Jung's failure to reach unit status

Winnicott sees Jung's trauma as both early (in infancy) and profound, leaving him with a split personality. He concludes that Jung's story shows primitive dissociative defenses in which the psychic pain accompanying abandonment feelings from his depressed mother was simply too much to bear. Instead of leading to psycho-somatic indwelling (unit status), this splitting led to psycho-somatic symptoms, such as the pervasive eczema (Jung, 1963: 8) reported by Jung around the time of his parents' separation and his mother's psychiatric hospitalization when he was three years old.

The other meaning of "unit status" for Winnicott is the Kleinian idea of working through primitive love and hate toward primary objects. Winnicott is disturbed by the lack of instinctual and object-relational conflict in Jung's account of his early years. For example, he sees no aggression against either mother or father, followed by reparation:

> Jung reached to his father's hate in an amazing way by having the idea ... that God had shat ... on the cathedral.... We could not expect to find Jung feeling God to be a projection of his own infantile omnipotence and the shitting as a projection of his own hate of the father.... What we cannot find in the material Jung provides is imaginative destruction followed by a sense of guilt and then by construction. It seems that the thing that was repressed ... was primitive aggression [which is] very difficult to get at when an infant is cared for by a mother who is clinically depressed.
>
> (Winnicott, 1964b: 489–90)

In Winnicott's theory, to come through such conflict with mother or father leads to a "unit" personality—one in which love and hate can be entertained toward the same object. This also provides a "place" inside for a (repressed) unconscious.

> Whatever Freud was, he had a unit personality, with a place in him for his unconscious. Jung was different. It is not possible for a split personality to have an unconscious, because there is no place for it to be. Like our florid schizophrenic patients (though he was not one) Jung knew truths that are unavailable to most men and women. But he spent his life looking for a place to keep his inner psychic reality [488] [seeking to become] a unit with a capacity to hide secrets instead of a split personality with no place for hiding anything.
>
> (Winnicott, 1964b: 487)

Jung's lifelong and futile search for his whole self

Winnicott seems to feel that Jung spent his whole life in a search for a coherent self and a way of feeling real—something that "unit personalities" don't have to do. "It is truly difficult," says Winnicott (presumably speaking as a unit personality), "for those with healthy unit personalities to achieve empathy with those whose divided selves give them constant trouble" (Winnicott, 1964b: 491–2).

In a final sweeping gesture of dismissal, Winnicott opines:

> Eventually Jung reached the centre of his self ... this seems to have been satisfying for him, and yet somewhat of a blind alley.... In any case, he was preoccupied with the mandala which from my point of view is a defensive construct, a defence against that spontaneity which has destruction as its next-door neighbor. The mandala is a truly frightening thing for me ... it is an obsessional flight from disintegration. Jung's description of his last decades spent in search of the centre of his self seems to me to be a description of a slow and wearisome closing down of a lifetime of splendid endeavor. The centre of the self is a relatively useless concept.
>
> (Winnicott, 1964b: 491)

Jung's splitting defenses

Winnicott concludes from the evidence Jung has presented of his divided self—his No. 1 and No. 2 personalities, his childhood fears and terrors, plus the tension in his parents' marriage, including his mother's depression and early hospitalization—that Jung was "threatened by an ego-disintegration (a de-personalization), a reversal of the maturational processes" and that "his defenses settled down into a splitting of the personality [with dissociation]" (Winnicott, 1964b: 485).

In short:

> Jung, in describing himself, gives us a picture of childhood schizophrenia, and at the same time his personality displays a strength of a kind which enabled him to heal himself. [through the arduous work of writing of his autobiography] [483].... By the age of 4 Jung's psychotic illness was established, and defences which were to be lifelong served him well; it is remarkable that in the end he was able to understand his own psychosis as deeply as he does in this autobiography.... It is in the area of psychosis rather than that of psychoneurosis that we must expect to find cure by self-healing. Jung provides an example of this, but of course self-healing is not the same as resolution by analysis.
>
> (Winnicott, 1989: 484)

Winnicott seems to feel that Jung made a life-work out of exploring his defense organization and that this is partly how he healed his split psyche:

> Jung's life has shown, I believe, how psychotic illness may not only give a person a lot of trouble, but may also push that person on to exceptional attainment. He has, of course, thrown a beam of light on the problem that is common to all human beings, in so far as there are common defences against intolerable or what might be called psychotic fears.
>
> (Winnicott, 1989: 492)

This latter point about universal defenses is interesting and we will come back to it below.

Evaluating Winnicott's interpretations

What are we to make of these largely negative interpretations and how do they stack up against Jung's self-descriptions (above) and his struggle "between the worlds" in his autobiography. I will take up Winnicott's criticisms one at a time.

Winnicott's first allegation: Jung's failure to achieve "unit status"

Winnicott wants to emphasize Jung's early splitting and dissociation, leading to the lifelong condition of a seriously divided self. There is certainly evidence for a divided self in the autobiography, but Jung seems to have been very aware of both sides of his inner division, describing his No. 1 and No. 2 personalities in vivid detail. This is not the kind of *primitive dissociation* found in early trauma, with amnesia barriers between discrete, segmented self-states and the resulting annihilation of symbolic capacity. So Winnicott's claim of psychotic levels of dissociation seems to miss the mark.

In support of this position it is important to note that Jung's early feelings of anxiety around his parent's separation, including mistrust of his then-depressed mother, date from between his third and fourth year—hardly the traumas of early infancy. Winnicott seems to believe that Jung's mother was depressed in his infancy and there is no evidence for this in the autobiography. Her depression occurred years later. Hence, Winnicott's interpretations go far beyond the evidence and therefore seem formulaic, i.e., imposed upon the data.

For example, Jung's earliest memories are of beauty and happiness (there are several of these) not fear or anxiety. Jung reports one such memory:

> One memory comes up which is perhaps the earliest of my life, and is indeed only a rather hazy impression. I am lying in a pram,

> in the shadow of a tree. It is a fine, warm summer day, the sky blue, the golden sunlight darting through green leaves. The hood of the pram has been left up. I have just awakened to the glorious beauty of the day, and have a sense of indescribable well-being.
>
> (Jung, 1963: 6)

This is hardly the picture of a disturbed or split childhood psyche and instead suggests a secure early attachment and probably a good-enough beginning for the infant Jung with his mother. Children without such secure early attachments are unlikely to report first memories of "indescribable well-being" in nature. And yet Winnicott, a pediatrician, cannot accept this. He acknowledges these early memories of beauty and happiness but then says:

> there is a negative of this sort of positive feeling experience, which in the end we must try to discover. It will turn out to be a distortion of integrative tendencies secondary to the mother's maternal failure due to her own illness.
>
> (Winnicott, 1964b: 484)

And again:

> There is evidence of an earlier external factor, namely the maternal depression, which affected his infancy and provided the negative for the positive qualities that he projected on to the landscape, on to things, and on to the world. *His earliest memory is not of his mother.*
>
> (Winnicott, 1964b: 485; emphasis added)

Winnicott's complaint that Jung's earliest memory was "not of his mother" is an almost amusing caricature of Winnicott's complete preoccupation with the infant–mother dyad, to the exclusion of any other sources of the child's inner life. It shows his "one-eyed," object-relational bias and his imposition of a formulaic interpretation onto the reality of Jung's experience. Here we have the objective data of Jung's earliest memories, which include feelings of "indescribable well-being" a sense of splendid beauty, of "inconceivable pleasure" and "incomparable splendor" (Jung, 1963: 7)—all descriptors of what Jung later called "God's world"—reduced by Winnicott to artifacts of failed mediation by his (allegedly depressed) mother of infancy.

Winnicott's second source of evidence for Jung's alleged failed "unit status" is the lack of any explicit expressions of ambivalence toward his parents, especially anger. (In the Kleinian paradigm, love and hate felt toward the same object lead to reparation, object constancy, the depressive position and hence to "unit status.") It is true that Jung's feelings of

such ambivalence toward his parents are not made explicit in the autobiography, but they are certainly implied, for example in his palpable mistrust of his mother after her long separation from the family, and in his disappointment in his father's empty and insipidly positive religiosity, etc. And there is certainly plenty of aggression in Jung's childhood play, for example his early game of building brick towers and then "rapturously destroying" them with simulated earthquakes (Jung, 1963: 33). This playful working out of inexpressible affects by a child with a vivid inner life does not strike us as unusual for nineteenth-century European family life, and is certainly not an indication of "failed unit status" or descriptive of "childhood schizophrenia."

Winnicott wants to say that Jung's primitive aggression was repressed and couldn't be worked out with his objects (especially his depressed mother)—hence it came out in bizarre adolescent fantasies like God shitting on the cathedral. In my experience there is some truth to Winnicott's suggestion here, notwithstanding the fact—emphasized by both Sedgwick (2008) and Meredith-Owen (2011)—that Winnicott himself suffered as a boy with the same problem—lots of anger together with a depressed mother—and hence was inclined to "see" this constellation everywhere.

The truth I see in Winnicott's suggestion is that Jung never did have a chance to work out his considerable aggression with his important outer objects (one might ask, "who does?"). After Jung's parents, Freud especially failed him in this respect as the above correspondence indicates, because Jung really *did* try to express his honest hot anger at Freud's paternalism, and Freud found it "too much" and angrily withdrew his friendship, later denigrating Jung in a letter to Abraham as "crazy, sanctimonious and brutal" (Homans, 1989: 40).

As I have pointed out in Chapter 3, Jung never found a meaningful place for anger and aggression in his *theory* of personality development and this (along with a lack of understanding about primitive defenses) has had unfortunate consequences for the field of analytical psychology. As with so many of his difficulties in "this world," Jung slowly worked through his anger in the alternative inner world provided by his vivid, mytho-poetic imagination. For example, he found in the Yahweh of the old Testament an exemplar of both sadistic rage (perhaps his own?) and of sadistic mistreatment by the patriarchal rage and Others (perhaps Freud's?). In *Answer to Job* he showed how Job's courageous refusal to split the good from the bad object leads to a healing reparation with the object, and ultimately to the humanization of Yahweh's primitive omnipotence as he becomes conscious of his own evil and eventually agrees to "come down" into this world through the incarnation. This mytho-poetic working through of primitive aggression in his creative writing seems to have been effective for Jung up to a point—perhaps not as effective as interpersonal resolution through the transference. But how many transferences lead to this kind of full working-through of negative affect? In my experience they

are rare. Certainly what we now know of Winnicott's fear of anger and inability to express negative feelings in his collusive (tragically unsuccessful) analytic relationship with Masud Khan, for example (see Slochower, 2011), would make us somewhat cautious about such sweeping statements as: "of course self-healing is not the same as resolution by analysis" (Winnicott, 1964b: 484). Jung's work on himself demonstrates how a creative personality can use "active imagination" with the mytho-poetic realities of the inner world to get to a place of at least partial inner resolution even without the advantages of analytic psychotherapy.

Related to Winnicott's claim that Jung never achieved "unit status" until late in his life *after he wrote his autobiography* (!) is his idea that someone with dissociative defenses like Jung "doesn't have a place for his unconscious." Here Winnicott mirrors Freud's understanding of the unconscious as a repository of *repressed personal contents* only. In other words, nothing can appear in the inner world that is not first in the outer. In this view, repressed contents can be "hidden" in the unconscious, whereas dissociative contents are *unknown even to the dreamer*, and presumably remain unformulated and "lost" somewhere in oblivion, like Bion's beta elements.

This is certainly not true of Jung's experience. He was very conscious of his hidden thoughts, his frightening dreams, his personal secrets, his private ritual of carving the little manikin, etc. None of these were dissociated in the manner of "primitive dissociation," and to say that Jung did not have a "place" within which to hide secret psychic contents seems far-fetched at best, and at worst a complete distortion of the data supplied by the autobiography.

It is possible that Jung's defenses tended to be more dissociative than Freud's and that this opened him more to the *collective layers* of the unconscious than the personal ones. Certainly, Freud had nothing to compare with Jung's many years of experience in the Burgholzi Mental Hospital, with its many severely dissociated patients—patients like the "Moon-lady" with her florid archetypal fantasy (see Kalsched, 1996: 72–6). On the other hand, it would be inappropriate to say that the collective layer of the psyche is only available to those with primitive dissociative defenses. This is simply not true.

There are many people—Jung seems to have been one of them—who have mytho-poetically inclined fantasy lives, with great curiosity about and feeling for the mysteries of nature and the numinous dimension of inner and outer experience. Mystics the world over fit this description and it would be ridiculous to suggest that none of them reached "unit status." In saying that Jung has no "place" for his unconscious, Winnicott is tacitly admitting that he has no "place" for the collective unconscious in his own personal experience, *or in his theory* and therefore cannot understand someone like Jung except through the lens of pathology. This is a great limitation in object-relations theory in general and in Winnicott's failure to grasp the true depths of human personality (including Jung's) in particular.

On the other hand, Winnicott's observation that Jung's material is "out of touch with instinct and object-relating" (Winnicott, 1964b: 488) expresses a common complaint about Jung and Jungian theory and practice which may have some validity. In my experience, this problem often leads to a tendency among Jungians to move too quickly from the personal or from experienced affect in the body, into the head, into trans-personal or collective material. An example is Jung's interpretation of his underground phallus-dream as a "chthonic deity" without reference to other possibilities, such as his own forbidden sexual excitement.

We also saw this tendency in Jung's interpretation of his own violent visions in 1913. Instead of reflecting on what these might have to do with his own aggression toward Freud and his partisan followers, or the self-directed aggression with which his split psyche was attacking his own vulnerability, he explained his tormenting visions as premonitory "knowledge" of the collective violence surrounding the outbreak of World War I in Europe. This seems like psychic slippage that Jung unfortunately indulged many times. Among other things, it confirms Peter Homans' trenchant point that both Jung and Freud failed to ever adequately mourn their mutual losses, each defending against this unbearable pain in different ways (Homans, 1989), a mutual failure that partially explains the ideological wrangling and polarization in the psychoanalytic movement ever since.

Winnicott's second allegation: Jung's futile search for his self

Here Winnicott's misunderstanding of Jung seems to be based on a terminological error. The "self" of object-relations and the "Self" in Jungian theory are very different concepts (belonging in different worlds), one being more or less the same as the term "ego" and the other representing the ego's "Other" in the collective unconscious. Winnicott (1964b: 491) suggests that Jung was looking his whole life for the center of his "self" (a "relatively useless concept") and that this turned out to be a blind alley, i.e., the mandala which is nothing more than Jung's "obsessional flight from disintegration" (Winnicott, 1989: 491).

As we have already described, Jung's inward thoughts and fantasies introduced him to mysterious powers and "presences" occupying the hinterland of his unconscious. He became convinced that his prescient and uncanny dreams came from this same hinterland. His curiosity about the author of dreams, which occurs repeatedly throughout the autobiography, was the same wonderment that struck James Grotstein (2000) when he had a major numinous dream as a medical student and wondered what mysterious intelligence had created it. His "answer" is remarkably similar to Jung's (see Chapter 6).

As Jung's experience with dreams deepened, he began to have many such encounters with a central archetype that seemed to function as a

non-subjective partner in the unconscious. This non-subjective partner often seemed to have an uncanny intelligence about things. It seemed to be able to see the whole picture of a person's life, and sometimes it would speak with a kind of wise oracular voice. Jung called this organizing and guiding center in the unconscious the *Self*. He thought of the Self as the "dream-maker" in the psyche and he found the perspective of this dream-maker on his own life uncannily perceptive. Not infrequently it offered guidance or a counterpoint that seemed to balance a one-sided conscious attitude. It was as though the Self "saw" us from a wider perspective and then provided us with hints of this wider perspective in our dreams.

Later in his life, when Jung discovered alchemy, he came across passages that helped him make sense of this remarkable intelligence in the unconscious. He discovered, for example, in the writings of an old Alchemist Gerhard Dorn, a follower of Paracelsus, the idea that self-knowledge comes not from the ego, but from "sparks of divine illumination" that would begin to appear in the darkness if we freed our minds and looked inward with the right attitude. In fact, said Paracelsus, one learns about this inner light through his dreams. "As the light of nature cannot speak, it buildeth shapes in sleep from the power of the word" (quoted in von Franz, 1991: 7).

Paracelsus asked the same question that Jung asked, i.e., "where does this light and wisdom come from?" His mystical answer: "it is in us and not of us, but of Him to Whom it belongs, Who deigns to make us his dwelling place.... He has implanted that light in us that we may see in its light ... the light.... Thus truth is to be sought not in ourselves, but in the image of God which is within us" (von Franz, 1991: 7).

This is the center that Jung was looking for and for which the mandala—he later realized from his cross-cultural studies—was a universal religious symbol. That is why it fascinated him. Unfortunately, without this mytho-poetic understanding or experience, the gap between Winnicott's perceptions and Jung's reality was, and remains, unbridgeable.

Winnicott's third allegation: Jung's splitting defenses and divided self

I believe that Winnicott correctly perceived that Jung employed dissociative defenses in order to manage his unbearable childhood experience. But as I have already remarked, Jung's dissociation was not the primitive type that we see so often in early trauma. Jung's dissociation falls short of what Bromberg (1998) terms "pathological dissociation" or Stern (1997) "dissociation in the strong sense." Among other things, Jung was aware of the switch between self-states occasioned by his dissociation, and in my experience, this is never the case in more severe forms of dissociation such as dissociative identity disorder (DID).

In Jung's description of his dissociation (see above account of the "soundproof door closing on a noisy room"), a witnessing consciousness is

present. This is clearly a form of dissociation, but not one of "psychotic" proportions as Winnicott alleges. Instead, this dissociation opened up the world of Jung's No. 2 personality with all its precocious rationality and mytho-poetic wisdom. As we have already seen in earlier chapters, this precociously mature self seems to have access to certain uncanny powers in the unconscious—powers Jung came to believe derived from a collective layer. Functioning as a self-care system, these powers seem to weave fantasies around the beleaguered ego, holding some spark of true selfhood in being. They seem able to cast spells and put the fractured ego in a traumatic trance. This layer of the unconscious is full of mytho-poetic denizens and preternatural presences. These images create a "net" that the traumatized ego may "fall" into. But these images and affects have an internal cohesion—even a centering "intelligence," and in themselves do not imply psychosis.

Even Winnicott comes close to such an acknowledgment when he admits that

> Jung ... has ... thrown a light on the problem that is common to all human beings, in so far as there are common defences against intolerable or what might be called psychotic fears.... Naturally [the content of these defenses] ... were eventually found to be closely related to common denominators in anthropological lore.
> (Winnicott, 1989: 488, 492)

Winnicott's acknowledgment that the need for defenses is *universal* in human life because *all* human beings are confronted with fears and anxieties that are intolerable is a crack in the neat diagnostic structure he has erected between "split personalities" and those who have achieved "unit status." If all human beings have this problem then perhaps there is a *spectrum* of environmental failure leaving everyone more or less divided, more or less defended (dissociated), and more or less whole. In the healthy person, it is the ego's job to regulate affect and to mediate its expression. In the less healthy (because traumatized) person, a second "world" is brought into play (recruited for defensive purposes), and it is up to the deeper "intelligence" in this defensive system to regulate affect and its expression. As we have seen, this self-cure is only a partial solution.

Winnicott's suggestion that Jung found "common denominators in anthropological lore" as he explored the psyche's universal defences and their symbolism is as close as Winnicott can get to the reality of a mytho-poetic function of the unconscious and its apparent archetypal structures. The idea that there might be an intelligence in the (unconscious) symbolic process, capable of seeing the greater wholeness of a person's life and representing this wholeness in the interest of survival suggests "two worlds" instead of one.

So Winnicott's review of Jung's autobiography, together with his object-relations orientation, gives us a compelling—if unconvincing—picture of trauma in general and Jung's trauma in particular. According to Winnicott, if the attunement and empathic responsiveness of the mother is not "good enough" in infancy, and her failure falls outside what he calls the area of omnipotence, then experiences become unbearable or "unspeakable" and constitute nothing short of madness. This madness is the psychotic illness that Winnicott attributes to Jung. By this madness he means the literal breakdown of Jung's childhood psyche—a breakdown that could not be remembered and around which the growing little boy (with the aid of primitive defenses) erected a false self, like a tree growing around an absent center, hollowed out by a lightning strike. This putative empty core is what Meredith-Owen (2011: 677) describes as Jung's "blank psychosis" following the primitive "disaster" of Jung's early maternal relationship.

This sobering and compelling story about the effects of early trauma represents a partial truth (about some victims of early trauma), but it is not the whole story, and certainly not an accurate story of Jung's childhood. Jung's dissociation appears to have occurred later than infancy and was milder than that associated with the most severe early trauma. Jung's dissociation left him with a divided self, but through this division he was able to discover the life-saving nutrients that can come to the beleaguered ego through *the inner world* and its mytho-poetic riches. Owing to his own innate genius and creativity, Jung was able to *use* this second world of reality to help mediate anxieties that were not mediated in his interpersonal world. This was not a complete solution, but neither is an ideal infant–mother relationship—if there is such a thing. But Jung's discovery of a second world of reality allowed him to sustain his central core self inwardly until such a time as he could come back into "this world" through later love-relationships—ultimately working out a relationship between his inner longings and his outer limitations, that satisfied him and allowed him to realize himself.

Because Winnicott and his Jungian followers such as Satinover and Meredith-Owen insist on one world (i.e., the outer world of object-relations only), they must reduce Jung's mytho-poetic and imaginal discoveries to some pathological aspect of the family drama or the unbearable vicissitudes of object-relations—all the while giving grudging acknowledgment to Jung's "creativity," or "brilliance." Hence we find Winnicott reductively interpreting Jung's ecstatic three-year-old enjoyment of sunlight through the trees as a defensive counterfeit of something negative underneath—i.e., his traumatic experience with his depressed mother. Tragically, according to Winnicott, Jung's "earliest memory was not of his mother"—as presumably it *should* be from his one-world perspective. In a

similar way, Satinover (1985) reduces Jung's interesting and prospective interpretation of his famous Siegfried dream (Jung, 1963: 180) to a mere defensive screen for his "wish" to kill *Sigmund* (Freud). And Meredith-Owen suggests that Jung's personal pleasure living in his tower at Bollingen where he enjoyed cooking his own meals and growing his own food "is surely expressive of his own long unmet need to bring together the nurturing and ruthless aspects of the breast" (Meredith-Owen, 2011: 686).

All these interpretive attempts fall hopelessly flat because they fail the binocular (inner/outer) vision that is essential if one wants to understand Jung—or anybody else for that matter. We are suspended between two worlds—one personal and material, one impersonal (collective) and spiritual. This is our human condition and also our human predicament. A full story of our potential wholeness-in-depth will require that we look through both "eyes" at once.

9

DIS-MEMBERMENT AND RE-MEMBERMENT

Reflections on a case of embodied dream work in light of Grimm's fairytale, *The Woman Without Hands*

The bud
stands for all things,
even those things that don't flower,
for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing;
though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness,
to put a hand on its brow
of the flower
and retell it in words and in touch
it is lovely
until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing.
(Galway Kinnell, *St. Francis and the Sow*, 1993)

Introduction

In this chapter we will look at an individual case against the backdrop of a popular Grimm's fairy tale, *The Woman Without Hands*. This case, with the fairy tale amplification alongside it, illustrates how early emotional trauma can "freeze the bud" of a person's developing life and prevent it from flowering through an inner process of dismemberment and negation known as *dissociation*. After dissociative defenses have dominated and subjugated the inner world, it is necessary, as Kinnell says in our epigraph, "to re-teach a thing its loveliness ... until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing."

Such "re-teaching" is a more complicated process than simply "loving someone back into health." In the psychoanalytic process it means following the patient's life narrative back to those places that are still unstoried, where the original, developing "loveliness" of the person's life was interrupted by pain that was simply too much for the child to bear. Such pain triggers primitive psychological defenses and these in turn open gaps or faults (Balint, 1979) in the landscape of the patient's evolving emotional and mental life. These ruptured places prevent the "flowering from

within" of the patient's true potential—the "bud," which we might think of as the imperishable personal spirit or soul. In order for this bud to "flower again from within" the gaps in the patient's life-narrative—created by the violence of dissociation—must eventually be filled in with personal suffering. This entails a mutual journey into the nether regions of the patient's history—a journey such as that of Dante and Virgil in Chapter 3—and requires careful attention to the unconscious, as well as to the body, where many of the traumatic memories are encoded as psychosomatic symptoms. The case that follows of my work with "Deborah" illustrates such a mutual journey.

In Jungian psychoanalysis, dreams are the *via regia* to the re-experiencing of the hellish dissociative places in the traumatized psyche. Both the case that follows and the fairy tale alongside it give us disturbing images of these dismembered places in the psyche—images of chopped-up or eviscerated bodies, split-off limbs, etc. To re-visit the places of unremembered trauma out-pictured by these images is often terrifying for the patient, and yet Deborah knew she had to go there. She told me in her first session that she had spent much of her life either frozen in fear or dissolved in a kind of nameless despair over her mother's incessant criticism, neglect, and violence. "My mother's rages terrified me," she said. "I lived a life of constant vigilance and fear of her. I would cringe every time she entered a room, and I'm still cringing now whenever that fear returns. My Spirit was crushed by my mother and I don't know how to get it back."

Deborah's mother had died a year before our analytic adventure began, but this did not keep her "voice" from constantly menacing Deborah's inner world. Deborah had always been a very sensitive, shy, and vulnerable little girl, and these qualities, together with her premature birth (her first week was spent in an incubator) and a near-death experience in her first year of life, set the stage for an infancy and childhood of painfully unmet dependency needs and terrifying affects she simply could not metabolize on her own. She was the fourth child in a family of ten children, and her parents were often overwhelmed or absent. Her alcoholic mother began "disciplining" each child as soon as it became independent. This often meant physical abuse. Besides her own regular spankings, Deborah witnessed her siblings being hit and beaten, sometimes with sticks or coat-hangers, to the point of bloodletting. Frozen inside, she would listen to the screaming from another room, trying to remain invisible and "waiting for a better time." Her terror was overwhelming and made for the kind of emotional trauma that often leads to dissociation and fragmentation of a child's inner world, as well as to a major separation between the body and the mind.

Despite these shaky beginnings, Deborah was dedicated to addressing the great despair and violence that she knew lived inside her. The following story of our work together shows how this courageous woman fought to overcome the dismembering effects of dissociation through her analysis and through various forms of body-work in conjunction with her analytic

process. It also illustrates a major thesis of this book, namely that it is not just the analytic relationship that heals, but also the patient's inward relationship to other resources, especially the imaginative resources of the mytho-poetic psyche—what Jung called the collective unconscious, popularly known among primal peoples as the "spirit-world." In Deborah's case, the spirit-world helped her with its healing powers through her dreams, her love of nature, her creative childhood play with dolls, and in adolescence through the Native-American tradition where she read Native legends and studied Hopi and Navaho religious practices. In the alternative world supplied by these latter aboriginal traditions, her own aboriginal self could relax and feel at home.

Deborah's story shows how a positive connection to the numinous, archetypal world can have a healing effect when one's life is menaced by the negative side of this same world, found in the archetypal defensive structure that we witnessed in Chapter 3 with its reigning tyrannical Dis. As her therapist, I found Deborah's courage and devoted access to the life-promoting side of the numinous very touching, and I believe my openness to and interest in her mystical experiences and creative use of imagination had important consequences for the outcome of her therapy. The prospect of a favorable outcome in a case of early trauma such as this is immeasurably enhanced if the unfolding conversation between the analytic partners can include "spiritual" and "sacred" matters, as it did between me and Deborah. The psychoanalytic partnership heals—not only because it creates narratives and interpretations that rationalize human experience (one world)—but because it enlarges human experience with the breath of mystery (two worlds).

Both Deborah's personal life and the Grimm's (1972) tale, *The Woman Without Hands*, which I will employ for amplification, begin with a symbolic dismemberment. In both cases, this traumatic early wounding leaves the female subject in each story, maimed and struggling with daimonic levels of shame and alienation. In both cases, recovery is a slow and agonizing process, but in both cases recovery is made, and the joy of the lost original condition of wholeness is slowly re-found. Life becomes possible again, but not without great pain, and not without both human and "divine" intervention. Along the way, the two worlds of spiritual and material reality slowly knit together again, creating a "potential space" within which life can once more "flower from within, of self-blessing." Dreams are often one of the primary vehicles for this knitting together, as is the love and genuine regard flowing into the potential space created by the analytic relationship.

On the inclusion of fairy tales

Much of the therapeutic work in any Jungian analysis is oriented by the patient's dreams, which open a relationship between the ego and what

Grotstein (2000: xv) calls the "ineffable subject of the unconscious." As Jung has shown, fairy tales are the collective dreams of humankind. Therefore, while fairy tales may seem a quaint form of literature to include in a clinical case, their wisdom can be very helpful. Their inclusion in this chapter helps draw attention to the fact that trauma and dissociation have been processed by the symbolic resources of mankind since time immemorial. And many patients like Deborah find their way to these great therapeutic symbol-systems long before they enter analysis as adults. Collective myths and folk tales tap the deep resources of our race and give us ways of relating to our own experience, informed by the wisdom of the ages. They show how trauma is viewed, so to speak, *sub specie aeternus.*

In language I used elsewhere (Kalsched, 1996: 6), I cautioned that

> some readers who are unacquainted with Jung's approach, may find this attention to folklore and mythology somewhat strange for a psychological essay, but we must remember, as Jung has repeatedly pointed out, that *mythology is where the psyche "was" before psychology made it an object of scientific investigation.* By drawing attention to the parallels between the findings of clinical psychoanalysis and such mythical ideation we demonstrate how the psychological struggle of contemporary patients (and those of us trying to help them) runs rather deeper into the symbolic phenomenology of the human soul than recent psychoanalytic discussions of trauma or the "dissociative disorders" are inclined to take them. Not everyone is helped by an understanding of these parallels, but some people are, and for them, this binocular way of viewing simultaneously the psychological and religious phenomena is equivalent to finding a deeper meaning to their suffering and this in itself can be healing. It is not an accident that our discipline is called depth psychology, but for psychology to remain deep, it must keep one "eye," so to speak on the life of man's Spirit, and the vicissitudes of the Spirit (including its dark manifestations) are nowhere so well documented as in the great symbol-systems of religion, mythology and folklore. In this way, psychology and religion share, as it were, a common concern with the dynamics of human interiority.

The oppression of the body by the mind

It is now well understood in the current trauma literature that dissociation does not occur as a result of *external* events alone. While it may appear to begin as an automatic response to unbearably painful events in a child's life, it is *kept alive* by inner factors or defensive powers that haunt or hallow the unconscious mental life of the trauma survivor. If it weren't for this inner factor, trauma would extinguish over time. But it doesn't.

A traumatic self-state from the past, triggered by an inner "voice," or somatic reaction, will bring back a dissociated memory as if it were happening in the present moment, and with all the attendant fear, panic, and activation of the sympathetic nervous system that accompanied the original wounding in early life. Such trauma is often encoded in the body or various forms of behavioral enactment, and not in explicit memory. Sometimes patients will report feelings of vacuous emptiness inside, as if their bodies have been hollowed out like a shell. Often they are full of tension and fear, held in their bodies—chronic back problems, incapacitating menstrual cramps, migraine headaches, anorexia, bulimia—in short, the full spectrum of "psychosomatic disorders."

For these reasons, simple insight into the early traumatic experiences—while helpful—is not enough. We have to deal with the inner voices of fear and terror as well as the frozen, voiceless bodily states, and these are often not audible or visible until attention is focused on the inner world. Therefore, as therapists we must accompany our patients (like Virgil did with Dante in Chapter 3) into the trauma vortex to encounter both the fire and the ice of inner self-states, as well as the torturing demons that occupy these hellish spaces and dismember them from within.

Trauma patients have usually suffered severe mis-attunements or emotional trauma in the early pre-verbal stage of their development in which somatic discovery is normally taking place in the mother–infant dyad. Optimally, this dual unity of mother and baby is one of relative safety in which the mother continually introduces and re-introduces the baby's mind and body to each other as Winnicott says (1949). Mind and body then are slowly knitted together and the result is a state of "personalization" (Winnicott, 1963d: 223) or "indwelling" (Winnicott, 1964a: 113) in a living body. However, if this optimal psycho-somatic partnership does not occur, then the baby prematurely *turns away from the mother and toward the mind instead* (Winnicott, 1949: 244ff.). Mental functioning becomes a thing in itself. Self-holding takes the place of holding by the mother. Self-cure takes the place of help from another person.

The result is a defensive posture in which a "pathological mind-psyche" (Winnicott, 1949: 247) is cathected by the infant in response to early developmental failure. Corrigan and Gordon (1995: 11) build on Winnicott's idea to show how an affectively charged relationship can occur to this substitute inner object:

> What our patients do cathect is their minds. For some patients, the mind object, dominating and attacking, is at odds with the self. For others, adoring and aggrandizing, it is at one with our self. Nevertheless, enemy or ally, the mind object has for our patients an independent and powerful existence. They are attached to its inner workings—to their unusual capacities to apprehend external reality as well as, for some, their propensity to

> spin forth internal fantasy. We suggest that the mind object—an object of intense attachment—substitutes for a transitional object and subsumes intermediate phenomena to its domain.

The mind-object is another way to describe what I have called the self-care system with its daimonic inner personifications. In its "dominating and attacking" mode it is well-represented by the figure of Dis in the medieval imagery of Hell pictured in Dante's epic poem and witnessed in Chapter 3. In the current case of Deborah, we will see additional Dis-inspired images that record the operation of primal dissociation in her inner world. But there is another side to the self-care system with its archetypal inner objects. It also contains positive, integrative energies (as we saw in Chapter 1, 2, and 4) and seems to have access to "higher" powers in the psyche as it tries to protect an innocent inner child from further damage.

Because its role is ambivalent, I have called the progressive part of the self-care system a "protector/persecutor" (Kalsched, 2006). The result of its domination/protection can be a defensive organization that cuts the person off (dismemberment) from their own embodied feelings inwardly and from a satisfying relationship with others and with the world in general. We have seen this structure described by Modell (1993) as a "cocoon" of self sufficiency, or by Steiner (1993) as a "psychic retreat" into which a pre-traumatic innocent part of the child regresses. However, what neither Modell nor Steiner acknowledge is that this inner sanctuary can be life-saving for the trauma survivor and may be experienced as a "sacred space." *The self-care system preserves the spark of each person's divine inheritance—the innocent soul—but at the price of its disembodiment and de-animation.*

Patients such as Deborah may carry on perfectly "normal" lives, viewed from the outside, but their bodies carry the sequelae of their early trauma in somatic symptoms that bear no obvious relationship to the early injuries. As Bessel van der Kolk (1996) has demonstrated, "the body keeps the score." These patients' bodies are oppressed by tyrannical mental demands and in this atmosphere the soul cannot take up a comfortable residence within, cannot "indwell." As a result, these patients' experience of aliveness *in their bodies* is compromised.

Psychoanalysts have begun to understand this, and a variety of bodywork approaches have been devised in recent years to address the problem of traumatic dissociation. These methods understand that past trauma and its defenses are often encoded in present physiological states such as restricted breath, frozen gestures, muscular tension, etc., and seek to work directly with these, helping the patient become more aware of his/her internal sensations and perceptions. Among specifically Jungian contributions to this work should be mentioned the body-sensitive work of Marion Woodman (1984), the longstanding work of Joan Chodorow (1978) on "active imagination in movement," and the "authentic movement" work of Tina Stromsted (2001). Outside the Jungian area, Peter Levine's (1997)

work has been widely recognized and Pat Ogden's (2006) articulation of a "sensorimotor approach" to psychotherapy provides many useful ways in which body-sensitive techniques can be incorporated into conventional psychoanalysis. Also, mention should be made of Sharon Stanley's (2010) training in "somatic transformation," which she describes as a "lifespan approach to the healing of trauma" and also the work of Emilie Conrad (2007), called "continuum," an approach designed to release the body's fluidity, flexibility, and connection to the underlying rhythms of life itself—rhythms that have been scrambled or annihilated by early trauma.

In my analytic work, I frequently refer people to one or more of these resources for body work which then serves as an important adjunctive therapy to their analytic experience. With Deborah, I didn't have to do this. She already had a longstanding traditional practice in yoga, meditation, the Alexander technique, and had signed up for several "continuum" workshops. As we will see, some of her experience in these workshops activated the split-off traumatic affect-memories, at the same time stimulating the psyche's deep resources, thus promoting a number of healing dreams.

The case of Deborah

"Deborah" came into therapy after dreaming that her recently deceased mother was slowly pulling her into death:

> In the dream I was in a tunnel with my mother and there was a suction or undertow that was literally dragging me down into darkness and death. I broke away to say good bye to my husband and son both of whom were crying. I tried desperately to hold myself away from death ... to stay out of it, almost like I was pulling the atoms of myself together to resist the undertow into fragmentation, but I knew it was hopeless. I was overcome with grief.

Deborah knew instinctively that this dream had to do with her increasing depression and that the "ghost" of her cruel mother had possessed her for years. In addition to her depression, she complained of constant anxiety and tension in her body. She felt contracted and "up tight," unable to speak—sometimes even unable to breathe. "I can never express my needs," she said,

> Any kind of conflict terrifies me. I'm pathologically nice. The tension in my body is tremendous. I walk around in the world as if I'm afraid I'll be hit, contracting in order to make myself smaller. I hold myself together ... I can feel it in my shoulder, my throat, my hips ... like I'm always ready to run. I know that all of this is because of "Jan" (her mother's first name). She was an alcoholic and a "rageaholic."

As the fourth child in a family of ten siblings, Deborah was witness to the slow deterioration in her parents' ability to cope with their ever-growing Catholic family. She was especially aware of the growing desperation and violence in her mother—a woman who had been orphaned at an early age. One of Deborah's siblings was born with fetal alcohol syndrome because of the mother's increasing alcoholism, and the older children were so neglected that when each succeeding child was born, Deborah remembers how she and her older siblings would take the baby and pass it around among themselves in bed at night, in order to be comforted by the warmth of the little one's body. "Those babies saved us," she said "I feel really badly about using them in this way, but we were desperate."

Deborah's mother also singled Deborah out for ridicule and shaming. She would make fun of Deborah's smile or of her laugh, or she would embarrass her by sharing something private in front of others. Sometimes she would look contemptuously at Deborah, her fourth child, and say "I should have stopped at three!"

"She took my voice away," said Deborah,

> She stole my person ... she chased my soul out of my very being.... Fear became my being ... fear and hatred. But I didn't know what to do with the hatred. Then I felt bad for having all these bad feelings. Fear is how I knew her.

Along with her fear and even hatred of her mother, Deborah felt a desperate need for her persecutor's protection and nurture. She sucked her thumb until age 12. One time she fell down the stairs and made a huge crash at the bottom. Unhurt, she feigned injury, so she could cry in her mother's lap just to feel the warmth of her body. "To cling to something so horrifying ... you want it and you hate it ... needing the person who hates you. If I needed anything for real, my mother would say 'Oh you poor baby!' ... total sarcasm and humiliating laughter."

Another event in Deborah's childhood that left traces of terror in her immature psyche was a near-death experience she had as a one-year-old. She had been left alone in the care of her 2–4-year-old siblings and followed them onto the neighbor's terrace, where she ate some ant poison that was left around to kill these insects. When finally found by her father, she was foaming at the mouth, near death and taken to the hospital where they were barely able to save her life. Deborah had no explicit memory of this event, but she always had the sense that this early experience might be the source of the recurrent nightmares she had as a child where the physical sensation of huge amoeba-like forces would threaten to engulf and overwhelm her. She had a dark sense of having visited death—a somatic memory locked somewhere in her body.

Deborah's school life and adolescence were also difficult. By the age of 16 she was self-medicating with alcohol and pot, then later cocaine. "Drugs

would open me up," she said, "but at the price of fogging me out.... But I needed that fog." She met her husband in one of those "fogs." He was a sensitive young man—trying to find his way like she was—and the two of them fell in love and went to Grateful Dead concerts where there were plenty of other lost souls but lots of transporting music. After college, they married and their new life together gave them both a much needed loving sanctuary from the chaos, violence, or neglect in their respective families. Together, life became possible again, albeit with the now-chronic fear of losing each other. They had two beautiful children and settled down to create their own version of the American dream.

As Deborah's therapy proceeded, the traumatic details of Jan's cruelty slowly emerged and with these details deep expressions of sadness and outrage—now witnessed for the first time by me. "How could she do these things!?" Deborah once lamented through her tears.

> Why didn't she ever comfort me ... why only my helpless Dad? I was so little ... did she get some pleasure out of it ... she was so mean! I couldn't even breathe in her presence! It was like living in a concentration camp. I'd have constant nightmares and stomach aches. The blood would drain from me at the very sound of her voice. I never wanted to come home. I was afraid to ask her anything ... to tell her anything ... afraid to be like her.

The violence and deprivation of Deborah's childhood were clearly too much to bear. "Sometimes I feel like a lot of my life is lived trying not to feel that level of violence in myself," she said, "or that terrible level of injury and grief. "Part of me doesn't want to be any part of my mother's violence ... doesn't want to be like her in any way, but I'm beginning to realize I have that in me" she said. "I can feel it in the body work I'm doing at Continuum. If I open up for just a moment an inner voice like my mother's says 'I'll give you something to cry about!' "

As we saw in Chapter 3, Deborah was describing what it's like to be taken over by Dis and his nihilistic minions. The outer persecution and violence of her mother had ended, but now, insidiously, it found its way into her inner world. Try as she might, she couldn't seem to get out of this "pact" with the introjected—now amplified—Devil/mother.

The Woman Without Hands: part I

The heroin in Grimm's tale *The Woman Without Hands* finds herself in a similar plight to that of Deborah. Here is an abridged version of the first part of the story.

A certain miller had fallen into poverty and soon had nothing left but his mill and a large apple tree behind it. One day when he was fetching wood, a strange old man stepped out and asked him why he was bothering to cut wood. The stranger

then offered to make him rich if he would just "give me what is standing behind your mill." The miller thought this must surely be the old apple tree so he willingly signed a written promise with the stranger, who informed the miller that he would come in three years to carry away what was his.

Soon great wealth started to flow into the house and the miller's wife inquired about it. The miller explained who it came from and what he had promised in return. "Ah husband," said the terrified wife, "that must have been the Devil! He did not mean the apple-tree. He meant our daughter, who was standing behind the mill sweeping the yard!"

After three years the Evil One came to fetch his prize. But the beautiful pious daughter had washed herself clean, and made a circle round herself with chalk so the Devil could not come near her. Angrily he said to the miller "Take all water away from her—otherwise I have no power over her." The miller did so, but the next day when the Devil came, she had wept on her hands and they were quite clean so again he could not get near her. Furiously he said to the miller "Cut off her hands, or else I have no power over her!"

After weakly protesting, the father cut off the hands of his daughter, begging her forgiveness the whole time (the Devil made me do it!). "Dear father, do with me what you will, I am your child" said the daughter, submitting. This time when the Devil came she had wept so profusely on her stumps that they were quite clean, so he lost all power over her—for the time being.

Here we have a violent image of dissociation—the chopping off of the daughter's hands by her own father—now under the spell of evil through his unconscious "pact" with the Devil. In Deborah's case it was the mother who accounted for her dismembering, but the result was the same ... the chopping up and fragmentation of her own wholeness. To lose one's hands is to lose a significant part of one's humanity. Hands are what we make things with, how we hold our children, how we get along in the world, so the loss of hands is a dehumanizing trauma—a de-personalization and loss of personal agency. It is also a frightening dismemberment. Parts of the body are lost, so a major separation between mind and body occurs here, as it did in Deborah's life as well.

Ironically, this dismemberment saved both Deborah and the tale's heroine from total annihilation by the forces of destruction. Dissociation, as a defense, saves the soul from an even worse fate (annihilation, soul-murder) by dividing it in two—then sending a vulnerable regressed part that carries the potential for wholeness away for safe-keeping. Sandor Ferenczi (1933) described this division as a split between a pre-traumatic innocent part of the self that regresses into the unconscious and a precociously adapted "progressed" self that carries on in the outer world. Winnicott (1960a) called this latter part the "caretaker self" or the "false self," identified with the mind, but it is not really "false." It is simply not the whole self and the sources of the whole self's potential spontaneity and aliveness will have to be slowly recovered by both the heroine of our tale and by Deborah in her analysis.

The emphasis in this part of our tale is on the complete guileless passivity and innocence of the daughter (sinless, washed, circled in chalk) in relation to the thoughtless stupidity—then cruelty—of the father in bargaining away his daughter to the Devil. This theme represents that universal split in the traumatized child's psyche between a progressed "survival" personality (the miller) that will do anything, out of its identification with the aggressor, to keep the ego intact, and a regressed, vulnerable pre-traumatic part of the self that is totally helpless. Bent on survival in the face of incapacitating anxiety—even to the point of attacking and maiming its own innocence—the progressed part makes an agreement with the Devil to keep innocence dismembered and to keep it from ever suffering the unbearable pain of early experience—to keep it out of life. This is the function of the self-care system as we have seen in previous chapters, but as James Grotstein (1984: 213) reminds us, "innocence, deprived of its entitlement becomes a diabolical spirit." It might be more correct to say that "innocence, deprived of its entitlement becomes *possessed* by a diabolical spirit." Dissociation becomes a way of life and the innocent core of the self—the "bud" remains frozen in the traumatic trance.

If we take a larger view, the Devil in our story is not completely negative. His temptation of the miller to claim something "more" than his ordinary life is the temptation that initiates our story in the first place, and many human stories start with such an act of inflated ambition. In this sense, the Devil is consistent here with his initiating role in the myth of the origin of consciousness at the beginning of the Bible, i.e., the Garden of Eden story. The Devil's invitation constellates the *initiation* archetype, and trauma is always about initiation into experience. However, trauma is usually a precipitous, calamitous initiation that provides a threshold of experience that is so unbearable that it can't be crossed until much later. Therefore, the normal process of initiation into experience is aborted. The child is faced with too much evil, too soon. This leads to dissociative defenses *against* experience.

In our tale, as well as in Deborah's life, innocence is lost precipitously, violently, catastrophically, and nothing can ever be the same again, until it is rescued from its archetypal sanctuary in the unconscious and led back into experience again. This requires safety and containment in the analytic relationship, as well as an understanding that the innocent part of the self knows about a sacred inner world and has been mysteriously saved in this world. Therefore, innocence's recovery on a higher level will take time, and will require resources from "beyond" the human world. Some trauma (such as that in our fairy tale, initiated by the Devil himself) can only be healed by a combination of personal and trans-personal intervention.

Deborah's early therapy process

Deborah didn't know that her mother's possession by the *Spirit of Darkness* had now found its way into her inner world, but her dreams began to make this clear. As she slowly began to trust the analytic process and our relationship, the story of her own innocence and its catastrophic dismemberment began to emerge. This was not yet a story that she, my 48-year-old patient, could tell. It was an implicit rather than an explicit story—still unrealized in words or conscious narrative. But as Deborah told me her dreams, and then let herself *feel* the tenderness and horror of some of their imagery, early memories began to take shape in the background darkness of her conscious life. We began, together, to contemplate (and find words for) the *speechless horror* of her early beginnings.

Here is a typical dream of this period:

> I dream I'm visiting a woman in California. She's beautiful and vibrant but she's lost something vital and is now incapacitated by sadness and depression. She's outside in a bed (like Frida Khalo), facing the sun. Suddenly her face turns black. She realizes something is happening and yells out for help. At that moment her whole face opens up and you can see her skull, blood, and tissues. She tries to yell again but now her whole abdomen opens up like it's been split in two, and everything just falls out of her ... blood and guts on the ground. You can see right into the cavity of her body. I wake up horrified.

Deborah knew instinctively that this dream meant that asking for help—which she had done by coming to therapy—was also opening up her own personal Hell of early childhood trauma. She wondered if it was too much, or too late.

To Frida Kahlo, Deborah associated the Mexican artist who had suffered from polio as a girl and then a devastating traffic accident in her twenties that had left her near death with many broken bones and her uterus penetrated by an iron railing. Kahlo painted her trauma repeatedly as graphic self-portraits and Deborah knew these paintings—frightening depictions of Kahlo's eviscerated or broken female body. Clearly Deborah's psyche was providing images of her early trauma, graphic representations that brought her feelings to the surface. This dream left Deborah with an almost-too-painful feeling of vacancy inside—of hopelessness and death, a "strain beyond frightening," she said, "when catastrophic expectations and fears take over.... It's a suicidal feeling," she said "it has to do with experiences that my soul couldn't bear ... not being sure I could go on ... like a black hole of despair at the center of me."

Another frightening dream from the early period of Deborah's therapy was the following. It occurred the night after she and her husband had

lunch in a local diner, where, in an adjoining booth, they had seen a physically handicapped, brain-damaged little boy who somehow seemed "dead to the world"—staring at nothing. Deborah was shaken by this and by the tragedy of this boy's life.

> Dream: I come into a garage area. I see the top half of a child's head has been chopped off—severed right through where the mouth would be. It has an angelic baby face but is bleeding profusely ... they're going to throw away the lower half and replace it with somebody else's. I am left with a horrifying vacant feeling inside—more pain than I can manage.

In addition to her association to the handicapped autistic boy in the diner, Deborah immediately sensed that this dream image related to a terrifying and unremembered injury to her own mouth she had suffered as a girl. Despite much dental work the injury had left her with chronic tenderness in her upper front teeth with a tendency toward abscess and infection. "I don't know what happened to me," she said, "I'm afraid to think about it."

Deborah also felt that this image might relate to the fact that the mouth is our organ of speech and the expression of feeling, and that each child born to her increasingly unhappy mother was "cut off" and rejected as soon as he or she began to talk. "Jan loved babies," she said, "but she hated us as soon as we became real people."

A third dream from the Hell of Deborah's activated unconscious was one we would never forget, and it occurred on a night when she had allowed herself to feel genuine anger at her husband after she'd been afraid he had emotionally abandoned her. This dream might have been dreamt by the heroine of our fairy tale:

> I'm trying to make love to my husband, but he has chopped off my arms and legs and I can't hold him with just the stumps of my arms. I'm afraid I'm messing up the bed with my blood. I'm slowly bleeding to death but I'm worried about defiling him with my blood.

Deborah woke up from this dream in a despair she couldn't describe in words—something fundamentally unspeakable, mortifying. "There aren't words for this," she said,

> I couldn't stop crying when I woke up. It took a half hour of my husband's holding me until I began to feel "normal" again. I couldn't go on living if I hadn't come out of that state—the feelings were suicidal. It was overwhelming ... terror without end—like a void of nothing at the center of me ... an abyss, total despair, exile and madness.

As I listened and tried to take in Deborah's personal version of what Kierkegaard (2004) described as a "sickness unto death," I felt the inadequacy of mere words in communicating terror and also the inability of mere words to console my terror-stricken patient. How were she and I to understand this image? Clearly the "husband" in her dream was not her actual husband with whom she had a loving and open relationship. Who, then, was this inner dismembering monster in her dream? What terrifying demon was it who attacked and chopped off her arms at the moment of her need to reach out and express her love, and in whose presence she felt guilty for her very life-energy (bleeding on the sheets)? In short, how might we understand Deborah's own private version of the Devil-possessed father in *The Woman Without Hands*?

Toward a theoretical understanding

Psychoanalytic theory is not without relevant explanations or interpretations. The question is whether these do justice to Deborah's dream and to the equally ghastly image of our fairy tale. Here is a sampling of what some of the best psychoanalytic theorists of recent years might say about this.

D.W. Winnicott might suggest that Deborah had experienced the unthinkable "primitive agonies" of an original "breakdown" of infancy, unremembered but now reawakened in the feelings of emotional abandonment and anger with her husband. The dismemberment would then represent a core of madness (disintegration) that could not be integrated or metabolized in her early life because of primal environmental failure, but was now presenting itself in her dream as the violent dissociation of body and mind. This interpretation would carry the implication that Deborah's capacity to have such a dream was the first step in the integration of her "speechless horror."

Melanie Klein would probably attribute this violent dismemberment to the death instinct, projected by the infant Deborah into her mother/husband and now returning as an attack on her own body—the essence of the "paranoid/persecutory position."

Heinz Kohut would probably suggest that the dream depicts Deborah's true "disintegration anxiety" of infancy—the deepest anxiety that man can experience—a kind of living Hell in which the fragile coherent self is threatened with an ominous dis-integration of its functions, leading to loss of humanness and psychological death.

Looked at through the theoretical lens of Francis Tustin, Deborah's dream might be understood to depict the total absence of a holding and containing presence in her infancy, leaving her drenched with the unbearable terrors of spilling away forever, falling, leaking through the body surfaces (bleeding to death).

Wilfred Bion would perhaps view her dream as a picture of the true malevolence and violence organized by a sadistic superego out of the

inverted aggression of her early relationship with the mother, attacking the links in her inner world, chopping up her experience, leading to nameless dread, inner "bizarre objects" and a reversal of alpha function.

And finally, Ronald Fairbairn would probably have seen such a dream as "proof" that the traumatized child "seeks to circumvent the dangers of expressing both libidinal and aggressive affect toward his object by *using a maximum of its aggression to subdue a maximum of its libidinal need*" (Fairbairn, 1981: 115).

All of these theoretical interpretations are contemporary mythologies really—efforts to imagine the inner world of a traumatic infancy in order to understand the developmental origins of horrors such as depicted in Deborah's dream or our fairy tale *The Woman Without Hands*. They all go back to failed *mediation* of the infant's omnipotence—a failure of the human environment to meet and moderate, metabolize and humanize what is alternately Hell or Heaven in the infant's pre-personal experience.

With rare exception do any of these theorists reference the *archetypal* nature of the inner world or the *mythological* level of the forces arrayed there. One exception is Henry Krystal (1988: 145–6), who makes an effort to get to the deeper archetypal elements in the infant's experience:

> What can be the psychic state of a child overwhelmed with the primitive affect precursors that involve a massive response mobilizing the entire autonomic system as well as the precursors of pain? How can we imagine the child's timeless horror? Our clues from experience with adults who suffered severe psychic trauma as children indicate that this kind of experience is the most terrible and indescribable hell known to man. It is literally a fate worse than death, an unspeakable horror that is expected to mount and get worse and go on and on ... an inconsolable state of a totally overwhelmed child ... the entire emotional brain ... is *flooded with ur-affects* ... the whole organism is in a state of alarm.

Krystal's reference to "ur-affects" (Jung would have said archetypal affects) together with the emphasis on "unthinkable anxiety," "unspeakable horror," and the defenses necessary to handle this anxiety, is an effort to express what Paul Ricoeur (1967) means by the daimonic level of human experience. Ricoeur says that the expression "*daimon*" represents the divine as "undifferentiated power; and so it provides an apt designation for the sudden, irrational, invincible apparition of the divine in the emotional and volitional life of man" (Ricoeur, 1967: 215–16). In place of daimonic, we might say mythopoetic or archetypal. Whatever term we use, we are referring to a deep, primordial, collective, and impersonal level of the psyche activated in childhood trauma. This level includes the numinous or *awesome* dimension of the earliest, pre-egoic, pre-historic, pre-verbal, experience of the child and the numinous can just as easily be negative as positive.

Sandra Edelman (1998) contributes to our understanding of this darkness by introducing the idea that certain infant psyches have been "touched" by the daimonic, taboo area of the sacred, and that when they are abused or attacked at this young age, it is like being attacked by the divine itself—the "living god"—the non-human, not-to-be-named wrathful deity. She suggests the result is not shame in the usual sense, for this or that bad deed, but *ontic shame*:

> At some time before the ego is formed, the infant psyche encounters the daimonic aspect of the sacred, the dark side of the numen; this encounter imprints the infant's archaic psyche with a sense not of "shame" but of its own *defilement* and consequent feeling of dread which, unless mitigated by a holding environment created by an empathic mother, becomes pervasive and chronic.
>
> ...because the trauma is caused by the parent-qua-god, the unspoken message is that the child is inherently unworthy before god or she would not be subjected to (chosen for) this experience.
>
> (Edelman, 1998: 3, 16)

The subjective *experience* of this dismembering beast is captured by Edelman in a quote from Kleinian analyst Nini Herman (1988: 152–3):

> This "spectre" ... is a conglomeration, brewed of witch and demon, of volcanoes that erupt, mud and earthquakes that send down roaring landslides of sewage, of teeth in a distorted leer, of part-objects and phantoms daubed with their own sadism, which we spew up in response to experiencing an absence where there ought to be a mother.... Here is the stuff of our worst nightmares, of a "bad" LSD trip, the ogre who in pantomimes makes all the children scream, the Bad Fairy, or the murderer, strangler, rapist or intruder: a synthesis of such pure terror that words are almost bound to fail us.
>
> (Quoted in Edelman, 1998: 85)

This is precisely the dismembering "specter" that Deborah experienced in the diabolical "husband" of her dream. It seemed her psyche was giving us an image of what must have been an image-less horror of infancy—an image *that previously could not be allowed into consciousness.* During our discussion of this dream, Deborah got in touch with similar feelings of overwhelm and helplessness from a very early recurrent dream that she used to have during her nap times where she'd be crying in her sleep. These dreams she said were pre-verbal, they were raw physical sensation, huge forces, overwhelming—almost like an amoeba threatening to engulf her.

"I feel like I've visited death," she said "I've been too close to death ... first as a baby with the ant-poison, and then repeatedly with Jan."

Other dreams of violence followed. Images of eviscerated animals, paraplegics who had lost their limbs who she was trying to nurse back to life. It was as if we had reached the area of what Michael Balint (1979) calls *the basic fault*. It was as though we had descended to the Ninth Circle of Hell and were forced to confront Dis himself (see Chapter 3). The aggression was overwhelming and all we could do was suffer through it together. Deborah was raw and fragile and more tense than ever. She became aware of how much violence there was in her head all the time, her "denegrating dialogue": "you're stupid, you're weak, you're useless, you're ugly." "It's like I'm on trial in the inner world," she said, "and guilty before I have a chance to speak."

Her needs for me in the transference increased during this period and we added an extra session each week for a while. Deborah's ability to ask for help and acknowledge how much she needed me during this period was crucial in the repair of her early relationship with her mother, where this neediness was ridiculed. So, too, was her reading in the area of trauma. She read an earlier book I had written on the subject of trauma (Kalsched, 1996) and several others she found on her own. She needed to read about other women who suffered similar deprivations and she needed to get the badness in herself "out" and face the colossal betrayal by her mother. In these and other ways we engaged the process of transforming her unremembered traumatic experience into something that could be mentalized, thought about, and grieved over.

It seemed that one of the main threads in the agony we processed through this period was her sense of being "empty of herself," a shell of a person, a wooden box around an emptiness where a heart should be. Deborah had never been "full of herself" with the sense that she was really living fully in her body as an ensouled person. Some essence of herself had been taken away or chased away. As Deborah grieved for her "lost soul" a place was slowly being prepared in our work for its return.

Slowly the violent nightmares receded and life began to feel more possible. Our analytic relationship became an important space within which she was safe enough to explore her life and some of its shameful secrets. As she allowed the innocent parts of herself to suffer and grieve, love flowed into the inter-subjective field between us. Both of us felt it. Deborah was very brave in expressing the shy love she felt and the dependency feelings that came up around it. "I've been wanting to tell you about this love I feel," she said, "but I've been afraid ... maybe even a little ashamed—like it would turn you off or scare you away."

I welcomed Deborah's affection, acknowledged my own warm and loving feelings toward her in return, and we explored her shy feelings of guilt and shame around the growing attachment between us. As we did this, I felt we were healing the terrible wound to her self-expression that

was out-pictured in her dream as a "woman without hands." Now her life-blood—her very capacity for animated aliveness and self-expression—was being expressed again, along with her fear of "defiling" her loved-object. But this time, her love was received and we were able to talk about her fears. This time, despite her dismembered early experience, she was being welcomed and held in my symbolic embrace and in the embrace of our growing understanding of her trauma, as well as in the containing space of the analysis itself.

After two years of analysis, Deborah and I were passing through the second part of our fairy tale—one where the tragic dismemberment of the heroine is slowly being healed. We might call this the "silver hands stage."

The Woman Without Hands: part II

The miller—now rich from the Devil—offered to keep his daughter handsomely for as long as she lived, but the mutilated girl said "Here I cannot stay. I will go forth, compassionate people will give me as much as I require." She then set off with the stumps of her arms exposed, and walked until she came to a royal garden full of beautiful fruit trees laden with delicious-looking pears. The girl was starving with hunger, but the garden was surrounded by a moat so she could not enter.

She fell to her knees and prayed to God for help, whereupon an angel appeared, dried up the moat; and enabled her to eat one of the pears. All the while, the gardener was watching in the bushes and the next morning, when the king came to inspect his orchard, the gardener told him about the strange sight of the maimed girl and her guardian spirit. The king wanted to witness this so agreed to watch with the gardener the next night. He brought a priest with him to deal with the angel.

At midnight the girl appeared again with her angel and ate another pear as the king watched. Then the priest went out to them and said: "Do you come from heaven or from earth? Are you a spirit, or a human being?" She replied: "I am no spirit, but an unhappy mortal deserted by all but God." The king said: "If you are forsaken by all the world, yet will I not forsake you." He took her with him into his royal palace, and as she was so beautiful and good, he loved her with all his heart, had silver hands made for her, and took her to be his wife.

This part of our story begins with the important statement "Here I cannot stay." In this moment our heroine listens to the "still small voice" of her innermost self and claims her own individuation process. Instead of masochistically and passively "belonging" to the father who has maimed her, she takes the first steps into her own irreplaceable individual life. To do this she must embrace her own suffering, and this means turning down the temptation of the father's offer to keep her with his ill-gotten gains from the Devil, i.e., to keep her in a half-alive, half-dead Limbo forever (see Chapter 3).

In *The Woman Without Hands*, part of the courage required of our heroine is to accept and embrace her own shamed, mutilated self-representation, without covering it up. With patients like Deborah, whose wholeness has been dismembered by early trauma, this amounts to an acceptance of one's own "crippled" condition and its attendant sense of unworthiness or unloveableness, and a willingness to live anyway, and not to hide from life and relationship. There is great resistance to admitting these feelings as the trauma survivor tries desperately to lead a "normal" life and to "fit in." However, as we have seen, Deborah had the courage to admit both her feelings of unloveableness and her feelings of love at the same time.

Without hands to pick fruit, the crippled daughter in the tale cannot eat the pears in the king's garden, so she falls on her knees and prays. At this moment an angel appears. This is an important moment in the tale. A moment of opening. True to mythology the world over, and true to the human psyche, the act of acknowledging one's own brokenness—the surrendering of all ego-pretence and the acceptance of one's own neediness—opens up deeper resources in the psyche/world. "Angels" appear. In psychoanalysis, dreams appear in which non-ordinary or miraculous "presences" materialize. A process begins (as it did when Deborah surrendered to therapy) that opens up the inner world. These events out-picture the psychological fact that the empirical ego has its inner foundation in trans-personal sources. Jung called this larger ego-foundation the Self, whose appearance in life and in analysis often occurs at the very moment the ego is defeated in its outer intentions or adaptation. We witnessed several examples of this in Chapter 1.

Emmanuel Ghent (1990: 109–10), writing from the psychoanalytic perspective, underscores the connection between surrender and experiences of both wholeness and holiness:

> It is worth noting the relation between healing, making whole and holy, all of which are etymological cognates. In this connection note Winnicott's (1971, pp. 28–29) description of the false seif as "missing the boat," or at times simply as "missing," "being absent." In the old testament the Hebrew word designating sin has as its literal meaning to *miss* as in "missing the boat." *The cure for missing is to become whole through surrender*, the cure for sinning, in this sense, is to come alive, to be present in full awareness, authentic, centered in the true self, holy.

At the point of surrender in our story, the king arrives, along with his companion, the priest. Looked at symbolically, the priest suggests that the king is open to trans-personal aspects of experience and takes this reality seriously enough to supply a mediator, an interpreter of what might be a divine/human conversation. The girl is accompanied by an angel—a

suggestion that her wounded innocence is the mark of her divinity and has attracted its representative from the "spirit-world." Such wounding of innocence seems to draw angels down into time and space reality, as we have seen in several cases in this book. St. Augustine is reported to have said (see Romanyshyn, 2002: 36) that to be an orphan is to be related to God. Or to put it in psychological language, when an essential God-given core of the self is split-off (orphaned) and banished to the unconscious as happens in trauma, it is "care-taken" there by archetypal powers (angels and demons) that feed it on the "ambrosia" of the Gods (necessary illusion) until such time as it can come back into the world and start to eat real food.

The arrival of the king is a turning point in our story. What does he represent? In early cultures, the king, queen, emperor, or chief was understood to have certain "divine" powers as befitted his or her royal office. (This was even true in Japan up until 1946, when the Emperor lost his "divinity.") In Jungian language, the king would be a hybrid personage—more than a human person in his "royalty," i.e., partially divine, but less than the trans-personal or divine Self in his humanity. In modern parlance we would say he has *charisma* from the Greek *kharisma* meaning, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* "a divinely conferred power or talent." Historically, because he was close to the divine, recognition by the king was equivalent to the ego's "blessing" by God himself or by the "greater personality" of the Self. Such recognition brought a sense of wholeness, and this is what happens to the maimed daughter in our tale. She is taken up into the human community once again. The king not only sees her beauty and wholeness, but he partially restores it by making her silver hands.

In seeing the maimed girl's missing wholeness—in holding an image of her that encompasses more than her dismembered body—the king symbolizes an attitude that the analyst or therapist often provides for trauma survivors. He "sees her wholeness" (see Chapter 5) and relates to her as a *subject*. In the language of our epigraph, he "reteaches the thing its loveliness." This can be experienced as an act of grace and often initiates what Jung called the individuation process. Edward Edinger (1972: 40) has a moving description of this life-restoring experience:

> Patients with a damaged ego–Self axis [such as inevitably occurs in early trauma] are most impressed in psychotherapy by the discovery that the therapist accepts them. Initially they cannot believe it. The fact of acceptance may be discredited by considering it only a professional technique having no genuine reality. However, if the acceptance of the therapist can be recognized as a fact, a powerful transference promptly appears. The source of this transference seems to be the projection of the Self, especially in its function as the organ of acceptance. At this point the *central* characteristics of

> the therapist–Self become prominent. The therapist as a person becomes the *center* of the patient's life and thoughts. The therapy sessions become the *central* points of the week. A center of meaning and order has appeared where previously there was chaos and despair. These phenomena indicate that a repair of the ego–Self axis is occurring. Meetings with the therapist will be experienced as a rejuvenating contact with life which conveys a sense of hope and optimism. At first such effects require frequent contact and wane quickly between sessions. Gradually however, the inner aspect of the ego–Self axis becomes increasingly prominent.

Edinger goes on to express his conviction that such emergent transference experiences are more than the transfer of parental imagoes onto the therapist, and more than what many psychoanalytic theorists would describe under the rubric of "primitive idealization." Beyond this, he suggests:

> a realization that a profound nuclear process involving repair of the ego–Self axis is taking place, gives an added dimension to the understanding of transference phenomenon. Furthermore, one is then able to understand the therapeutic experience in the larger context of man's universal need for a relation to the transpersonal source of being.
>
> (Edinger, 1972: 59)

According to our fairy tale, in her mutilated condition our heroine has been "objectified" by the world—become a mere object in people's perceptions—even in her own eyes. Now the king sees her as a subject, beautiful, innocent, and good, despite her missing hands. Only love is capable of such vision and the king loves a wounded but beautiful young girl, accompanied by an angel. He is witness to the divine spark in her and falls in love with her wounded innocence and beauty. By relating to her with compassion, he "reteaches the thing its loveliness."

The king gives the crippled daughter silver hands—prostheses that restore her wholeness part-way. This partial restoration corresponds to the "transference cure" that often happens in the initial stages of psychotherapy as Edinger has described. The relationship with the therapist becomes the center of the patient's life. Things improve and self-esteem increases. The trauma survivor begins to feel less alienated, less crippled, more worthy, hopeful, and begins to create a generic life in which "fitting in" is easier, although based upon a secret dependency in the transference that cannot always be admitted. The defect of dismembered hands is less obvious now on the surface, but still present underneath. There is much work yet to be done but now there is more ego-agency and a relationship to support it.

Deborah's therapy process: the silver hands stage

In the middle of her despair, Deborah also said to herself "here I cannot stay." The dream of being pulled into death by her mother was the signal from her unconscious to do something, and she trusted this signal. She entered therapy. In Neville Symington's (1993) terms one might say that she chose the *lifegiver*. On its own, this step meant a partial liberation from the oppression she had lived under her whole life. But such an act also entails risks. It activated the demons of the self-care system, which began to get nervous that they were losing control. Their dis-integrative activities were apparent in Deborah's dismemberment dreams.

But Deborah's surrender to the psychoanalytic process also activated the integrative agency of the Self in her unconscious, and other dreams began to make their appearance that hinted at unexplored archetypal depths to her experience and the beginnings of a unifying orientation—a kind of vanishing point in the painting of her life. Her dream material began to hint at a larger vision supplied by some "ineffable subject of her unconscious" (Grotstein, 2000).

These more positive dreams were often archetypal in nature, and certain animals related to Native American culture began to make a regular appearance—especially turtles and bears. Early in her therapy process Deborah reported a "Bear dream" that became a kind of touchstone for us in the work. We would refer back to this dream later in connection with her body work and the memories it stimulated.

> Dream: I was in Maine with my husband. We were outside watching the night sky. A large bear with a salmon in its mouth suddenly walked right up into the starry sky. We were amazed. As he ascended, he adjusted himself to the constellations. We could see his profile and he shifted so he was in line with what must have been the big dipper—that's Ursa Major, which points to the pole star.

She associated the Bear to a fierce and protective mother-animal that will not let you get close to its cubs. This one had a salmon in its mouth and she loved stories she read about salmon and how they always return to the source of their life in the rivers of their birth ... returning "home" to their source.

I found this dream to be a beautiful example of how the psyche will sometimes compensate for a gap in a crucial personal relationship (Deborah and her mother) with a trans-personal or archetypal content. Symbolically, bears are associated with the Great Mother cult—perhaps because of their notorious protectiveness toward their cubs. Celtic tradition, for example, holds that the Primal Mother is the Bear goddess Artio, a fierce protector. A Roman statue of her is housed in the Historisches

Museum in Bern (Bear), Switzerland. Callisto, the Greek goddess, was reportedly turned into a she-bear by Artemis—then, according to Ovid, elevated into the night sky by Zeus, where she became the Great Bear-Mother of the northern skies. The constellation of the Great Bear was believed never to set, but to keep an everlasting watch and ward over the universe (see Bayley, 1968). Of the seven bright stars that constitute Ursa Major, two of them point to the pole star, the fixed hinge and pivot upon which the world turns—another symbol, in Jungian language, of the Self.

Deborah's "star-bear" carries a salmon in its mouth and Deborah had the intuition that this fish might point to her need to return to the "rivers" of her early childhood where so much trauma was trapped. She thought she would have to do this if she were ever to "spawn," i.e., regenerate her life again and live a more animated life in an ensouled body. She knew this journey would be difficult—against the current of her own resistance—like the salmon who swim upstream, back to their birthplace.

Other archetypal dreams followed. This one seems to focus on the same mother-wound as the bear dream, but our processing of this dream helped Deborah feel her deep grief.

> I'm in the place where I grew up. I see on my right an open area with a Native American Burial mound. It has the features of a large turtle shell. I am very moved. On one side is the entrance to the site. It is an arbor with a plaque and flowers that says "Jan" (the name we kids called my mother, instead of "Mom"). Then further on there's a woman running a meeting and my older sister Louise is speaking and Louise says "there's more to a mother's love than just giving something like money." I start to cry. Louise is speaking for me. I wake up sobbing with the realization that some people have never known the love of their own mothers at all! I am one of them.

This dream helped Deborah to "see" her trauma more objectively. Heretofore she had partly blamed herself for the failed relationship with her mother, taking on the shame of her own neglect as if to save her mother from her own anger and maintain the idealization of her so as to keep her need and loving feelings flowing. Now, thanks to her dream, she could see the cold hard facts of the matter. There simply are some children who never know the love of their own mothers! It is not their fault. This is just part of the human condition—not pain unique to herself. This realization released her grief and allowed Deborah to feel genuine empathy for herself and for her lifelong suffering.

Beyond this personal meaning, Deborah's dream shows us the archetypal background of her personal mother problem. According to her dream, her personal mother's body is embedded (buried) inside the archetypal mother. The turtle represents the earth-Mother in many Native

American cultures where she is honored for saving humankind from the great flood. She is the immortal Great Mother who stoically, silently carries the heavy burden of humanity's woes on her thick back. In the absence of her personal mother, Deborah needed the archetypal stories of Native American cultures to connect her otherwise orphaned self to its deeper support in the great symbol-systems of humankind. These symbols (the turtle and the Native American burial mound) helped her carry her personal pain, and now that this pain could be experienced again, they appeared in her dreams as if to help us understand the "larger story" behind her personal loss. Deborah's orphaned inner child had "lived" in this underground Great Mother turtle-mound—buried with her unbearable maternal experiences—but held there until she could see it and feel it and grow beyond it.

As our therapy adventure together deepened, additional dreams appeared which showed a series of lost, injured, or terrified children living in a violent or indifferent inner world. Slowly the dream environment changed and the lost children began to be cared for. Often Native American people—especially aboriginal women—appeared as sources of comfort or support. Soon Deborah was "adopting" these children as in the following dream:

> My husband and I are driving along a highway and we are passed by a van with babies on the way to an Indian reservation where they'll be adopted. We stop. One of the children is a boy who really enchants us. He's really happy and we want to keep him. Suddenly I can't find him and panic, but then see him on my husband's lap. We're really committed to adopting him but we have to make it "official."

Adopting the aboriginal boy—her own true spirit-child—who had lived his whole life on an inner "reservation" (psychic retreat), and "making it official" seemed to both Deborah and me to be a good image for her psychotherapy process with its slow recovery of her lost, pre-traumatic innocence and soulful aliveness.

By the end of our third year together, Deborah was noticeably more relaxed and in her body during the sessions, showed much more affect in our dialogue, and was even able to admit to strong feelings of need and attachment to me in the transference. I found myself similarly filled with affection for her and felt a deep respect for her resilience and courage in facing down her own demons. The warmth between us became a potentiated field in which Deborah could begin to feel some of the dependency feelings and longings for support that she could never risk expressing in her family.

The "child" inside her began to make its presence known both in dreams and in the tender exchanges between us. Sometimes I could see this child peeking out from behind a wall of fear. On my suggestion,

Deborah brought pictures of herself as a child and we reviewed her history and memories in relation to these photographs. Further dreams of her "little girl" emerged. I once said to her that we could think of ourselves as "co-parents" for her little girl and this idea appealed to her. She continued to make progress. On her own initiative, she started participating regularly in yoga classes and began going to a massage therapist who also did some energy work.

During this phase of her analysis I also heard about Deborah's sacred inner world of childhood, and she began to share some of the fantasy-play and mytho-poetic stories that helped hold her pain as a latency-aged girl. One of the resources that sustained her then was the world of her "Ginny Dolls." These, I came to understand, were small eight-inch dolls that were extremely popular in the 1950s and 1960s. These dolls provided Deborah with an imaginary alternative world—a world where life was possible. With them she could laugh and cry and make up stories with happy endings. "I wanted to be a doll" she said, "to be just 8 inches tall and press myself into their world and be safe and at peace. I think my play with them was part of what saved my spirit."

But not for long. At age nine all Deborah's dolls suddenly disappeared. Her mother threw them out. She decided Deborah was "too involved" with them!

With her dolls gone, Deborah turned to nature for comfort. At age eight, the family moved to a house in the woods and in those woods, among the small streams and meadows, she found another refuge and sanctuary for her spirit. Her relationship with her father was also a comfort, although as an object of the mother's contempt, he was helpless to defend her. Still, he read her stories sometimes and took her to church. She loved these stories and began to read in the local library—especially stories about Native American people and their struggles. Stories helped Deborah hold all the still unstoried pain she held in her body. "I don't think I would have survived," she said, "if it weren't for the Native American culture I studied. Their stories, and their relationship to the beauty and mystery of the 'Earth-mother' were like balm to my soul."

Among these stories there were two favorites. The first was *The Gunny Wolf* by Wilhelmina Harper (1937), in which a little girl lives in a cabin with her mother near a forest in which a frightening animal lives—the gunny wolf. One day the little girl is out picking flowers, singing her way along a path when suddenly she encounters the frightful wolf. But the wolf has heard her singing and asks her to sing again, which she does, despite her fear. Soon the wolf falls asleep and the girl tip-toes away. But the wolf awakens and chases her until she again sings him to sleep—and so on, until she is able to tip-toe home and lock the door.

This story about the sequential "awakening" and then eventual control over a frightening mental content by a young heroine reminds one of Jung's comment about trauma and wild animals:

> A traumatic complex brings about dissociation of the psyche. The complex is not under the control of the will ... it forces itself tyrannically upon the conscious mind. The explosion of affect is a complete invasion of the individual, it pounces upon him like an enemy or a wild animal. I have frequently observed that the typical traumatic affect is represented in dreams as a wild and dangerous animal—a striking illustration of its autonomous nature when split off from consciousness.
>
> (Jung, 1928: paras. 266–7)

The story of the gunny wolf helped Deborah master her fear of her mother's rages, which could awaken at any time and attack her—from within and without.

The second story—a Native American legend called "Little Burnt-Face"—Deborah read in the school library in *The Red Indian Fairy Book* by Frances Olcott (1917). This story strikes even closer to home and gives a beautiful description of how the trans-personal world can come to the rescue of a child's personally traumatized ego.

The story is an early Micmac Legend, showing parallels with the Hans Christian Andersen story of *Cinderella.* It describes the youngest of three sisters who is abused by the eldest daughter, who is full of envy. This jealous eldest daughter burns the face of the youngest with hot coals—then accuses her to the father of being negligent and falling into the fire. "Little Burnt-Face" lives in misery from this torture (like Deborah with her mother) but on the edge of the village is a beautiful wigwam where the Great Spirit-Chief lives with his sister—invisible to everyone but Little Burnt-Face.

The two eldest daughters dress in their finery and travel to the Great Spirit in hopes of winning his special attention by "seeing" him. Little Burnt-Face has nothing to wear, so she dresses in birch bark and shuffles off to join her sisters. Mocked and shamed by them, she is nonetheless invited into the wigwam by the Great Spirit's sister and is seated around the fire with her sisters.

The elder sisters fail to see the Great Spirit, but Little Burnt-Face has no difficulty. Not only is she able to "see" the Great Spirit, but she can also see how wonderful he is—how the lacings of his sled are made of a beautiful rainbow and how his bow-string is nothing less than the Milky Way!

At this, the Great Chief's sister smiles with delight, takes Little Burnt-Face by the hand, and leads her to the wigwam of the Great Chief, where she is bathed with dew until the burns and scars all disappear from her body and face and she is led to the Bride's seat, ready to receive the Great Chief in marriage. And when the Great Chief enters—no longer invisible, but terrible and beautiful—he smiles gently at Little Burnt-Face and says "so we have found one another." And she says "Yes." The wedding-feast lasts for days, and meanwhile the two bad sisters return to their wigwam in disgrace, weeping with shame.

This story shows many obvious parallels between the plight of its heroine and my patient Deborah, as well as the "woman without hands" in our fairy tale. There is first the persecution by envy-driven hatred (the two older sisters as a stand-in for Deborah's mother). Out of this hatred comes degrading abuse, the shaming, manipulation, and hopelessness—then the intervention of "invisible powers" that seem to represent the potential for the heroine's wholeness (the Great Chief in this story, the angelic presences and the king's love and compassion in our fairy tale, the mytho-poetic resources of the collective psyche in Deborah's life).

A reductive interpretation of the story "Little Burnt-Face" might see the final resolution (marriage to the Great Chief) as an incestuous wish for the father. Such a "classical" interpretation might point to the defeat of the evil sisters as an "Oedipal victory" by Little Burnt-Face over her sisters. No doubt all this would be true on one level. But it would cause us to miss the most important moment in this story, and only a depth psychology with one eye "looking out" and one eye "looking in" can see it. This moment happens when the Spirit Chief, invisible to everyone else, but now finally seen for the first time by Little Burnt-Face, says "So we have found each other" and she answered "Yes."

This beautiful moment commemorates a moment of union between the two worlds whose relationship we have been pursuing in the pages of this book from the beginning. It is the moment when the "terrible and beautiful" world of the Great Spirit, with its connective rainbow tethers and its milky-way bow-strings now finds its humble human partner and marries her—despite all the resistance thrown up by the "system" with its ruling tyrannical envy. It is the moment of union between the divine and the human, and with this union, the soul can be reborn into life on this earth. At last, something of the eternal has entered time and a link (marriage) between the worlds has been made.

This story of the human and divine worlds having "found each other" has to do with a miraculous penetration of this world by another greater world, forging a link between the unrealized spiritual potential hidden at the core of each individual life and the mundane historical existence in this body, this place, this time. I propose that Deborah loved this story not just for its wish-fulfilling triumph over her foes—not just because she wished to be elevated into a "grandiose self" or have her infantile omnipotence aggrandized. She loved this story because in it, something of her spiritual longing was satisfied. While such longing begins as the infant's desperate search for an attachment-bond with the actual mother, it does not end there. Or perhaps it would be better to say that the infant's longing for the object is the personal aspect of a deeper longing in all of us—the longing of the soul for its source in the Spirit.

With stories like Little Burnt-Face, and with the help of her dreams, Deborah and I were able to create a matrix of mytho-poetic story and

narrative that invited her soul back into her life with increasing frequency. Her body work continued to provide rich experiences for our analytic exploration. She took up photography and produced a beautiful show that was hung in a local gallery. Her struggles with ill-tempered bosses at work were not so upsetting and less likely to trigger her early mother complex. In analysis, her affect-tolerance was increasing, which meant that her sadness was no longer so unbearable. Once in the middle of our work on a painful dream image, she said "this pain has a boundary and is something I can feel. It hurts a lot, but it's not as abysmal as it used to be."

A similar process of healing is found in our fairy tale *The Woman Without Hands.* It is a place deep in the forest where our story's heroine retires for seven years with her child—a boy named "Sorrowful." Here, like Deborah, the heroine suffers a conscious grief for her lost early life, and her real hands slowly grow back.

The Woman Without Hands: part III

After the king had made his wife the silver hands, he had to go on a journey and left his now-pregnant bride in the care of his mother, along with instructions to inform him by letter when the child was born. When the "fine boy" arrived, the mother therefore wrote a letter announcing the joyful news. But the letter was intercepted by the same Devil who had tried to possess the young girl and then had her hands chopped off. He exchanged the letter for another in which was written that the Queen had brought a monster into the world. When the king read this he was much troubled but admonished his mother to take great care of his queen until his arrival. This letter the Devil also intercepted and instructions were given to the mother to put the queen and her child to death!

The mother refused to do so and instead sent the young queen with her child into the forest, bidding her never to come back again. The poor queen tied her child to her back and went away with her eyes full of tears. She fell on her knees and prayed and again the angel of the Lord appeared and led her to a little house in the forest on which was a sign with the words: "Here all dwell free." Another angel greeted the young queen and told her that she had been sent by God to watch over her and her child. The queen stayed for seven years in the little house and was well cared for, and by God's grace, because of her piety, her hands which had been cut off, grew once more.

Meanwhile, the king returned, discovered the Devil's plot with the switched letters and set off into the forest to find his queen and her child. He also wandered for seven long years and neither ate nor drank, but God supported him until at length he came to the little house where he was welcomed by the angel. Here he found his lost wife, and to his amazement discovered that her own hands had re-grown. A "heavy stone" fell from the king's heart. Now reunited with his beloved and their new son, the king and queen were married again, and lived contentedly to their happy end.

This part of our tale begins with a second abandonment or banishment—the second exile from home instigated by the Devil. The first is the father's. The second is the king's abandonment, or so the heroine is led to believe by the Devil's continuing trickery. The deep truth about trauma-therapy embedded in this part of our story is that while the initial dissociation constitutes the initial catastrophe—the unspeakable horror—nevertheless, splitting and wounding continue to be encountered throughout life. The internalized Devil/mother is inside now and continues its torments. Every disappointment and loss rekindles the original rupture with all its attendant fear and shame.

And yet there is a crucial difference now. Our heroine is *pregnant* and gives birth to a beautiful baby boy—and his name is "Sorrowful." The wisdom concealed in his name and this part of the story is that a deep healing of trauma's early wounding will require *devoted inward attention to the "child"* in the psyche who has been so wounded and who has disappeared in the unconscious. Seven years of attention! And this attention is somehow facilitated by the presence of a guardian angel, a "companion" of this child, as we have seen in the material reviewed in Chapter 2.

The presence of the angel reminds us that a psychic wound has occurred very early—before collective forces have been transformed into human ones. In other words, *daimonic* violation (dismemberment) must be healed through the intervention of equally *daimonic* support (re-memberment). This is not something that the interpersonal world alone can provide. Deborah and I provided the container for this healing, but there was never any question about "where" the healing came from. It came from the mystery of the unconscious with its integrative energies, its many "angels," and its super-ordinate central archetype, the Self. Under the supervision of the forest-angel in our fairy tale, the heroine's hands grew back. In her little cabin in the woods, attending devotedly to "Sorrowful," she became real. The angel "testified" (by its presence) to the miracle that this re-embodiment represents.

A sure sign of this second stage of inward healing is the ending of our story, where the Queen, now with her own real hands, marries the king *for a second time.* The first marriage was a rescue from without—what alchemy describes as a *lesser coniunctio,* which is the chemical combination of two elements which are insufficiently differentiated and cannot yet combine properly. The second marriage is a true wedding of equals on the common ground of each partner's wholeness. The new union is what alchemy describes as the *greater* coniunctio,[1] something contemporary psychoanalysis would describe as the emergent possibility of a symbolic life.

Deborah's time in the "forest"

As the spring of the next year approached, Deborah decided to sign up for a continuum workshop. She felt a deep need to work with her body

and to work on opening some of the areas we had found where she was so contracted. She said that with my help she now had a map of her trauma and a real sense of what she had been up against with her mother. But she now needed something more embodied and experiential, something she could explore in the safety of a feminine container, with other men and women. The workshop was a four-day intensive retreat with a group of some 20 women, led by Emilie Conrad.

This continuum workshop proved to be a breakthrough for Deborah. The workshop was held in a tent in the woods—just like the cabin in our fairy tale. In one part of the program, the group was asked to engage an imaginal exercise. Instrumental violin music was played and everyone was to imagine swallowing an egg—slowly—to open the negative space in the mouth and throat and to slowly move the egg down the spinal column, then up the front of the body and out again, all the while breathing in and out and keeping the egg moving, attentively following whatever feelings or images came up.

As Deborah entered the exercise she experienced the feelings she often had as a child—of her body dissolving, then contracting. She would find her muscles clenching, contracting, providing the container where her mother's touch was absent. She would try to breathe into these contractions and open to her feelings. As she did the breathing exercises she suddenly realized that she wasn't "supposed" to have her first breath! Her mother hadn't wanted her, hadn't wanted her precious first breath of life! Then her whole sad life started to unfold. She suddenly felt great compassion for the little girl that was herself and had an image of herself as a child in one of the photographs we'd shared, on the path of her life, like the path the egg was taking.

At each place in her body where the egg passed, she remembered being hit, or hurt, or shamed and at each place she kept breathing into the space where her body wanted to contract and retreat to keep the energy moving. As the egg descended, she felt like her whole insides were like an open wound. She could see way down into her core and deep inside, there was a slice, a cut that she thought might not be able to be healed, right down the center of her (like her Frida Kahlo dream), and when she saw this she began sobbing so hard that the continuum staff came over to her and asked if she needed help and she told them to hold her and they put their hands on her shoulders so she could continue to move the egg.

For the rest of the egg's journey, which lasted the better part of two hours, she cried on and off. She cried for her siblings, the ones she had watched beaten by Jan, she cried for her own children, and she even cried for Jan who had been totally abandoned by her own mother long ago.

When the exercise ended she was exhausted. She had never cried so hard for her own lost little girl-self. (Parallel with the fairy tale, this was part of her "seven years with Sorrowful.") The discomfort was intense, raw, but the acute pain was not as generalized or all-encompassing as before.

When she walked outdoors afterwards, the grass looked greener to her and the sounds and smells of the world were more vivid and sweet. She was in tears again but these were happy tears. Her childhood love for the natural world flooded over her like a great wave of gratitude and she fell on her knees to thank the trees and the animals and the birds for her life, for all of its beauty, and for the new freedom she felt. Maybe for the first time in her life, Deborah felt "full of herself."

The same night the weekend concluded, Deborah had an important dream:

> There's a beautiful white horse in a circus cage near where I grew up. The horse kept trying to jump out of the cage. On the third try it jumped so high that it cleared the top of the cage—it was almost flying, like Pegasus. Then it landed and its legs crumpled underneath.... Oh no, I thought. It's hurt. But then it got up, uncurled its legs and pranced off. Then I was on a horse. Then I woke up.

The relevance of this dream to the breakup of Deborah's archetypal defenses is clear. She also had been trying to "jump out of the cage" of her defenses for years—and had finally succeeded with the imaginal ritual of moving the egg. Mythologically, Pegasus is the horse that leaps out of the severed, decapitated body of the Medusa, when the great hero Perseus is finally able to subdue her with the aid of Athena's mirror-surfaced shield. And the Medusa is a classic example of the terrifying archetypal death-mother. Her gaze petrifies, and Deborah's body had been petrified with fear for a long time.

We saw the Medusa image in Chapter 3 as one of the daimonic guardian-figures that protected the inner sanctum of Dis at gate six of the *Inferno*. She is a representative of the archetypal defenses that Dis oversees, in this case the defense of psychic numbing and "petrification," i.e., turning to stone.

But now Deborah's body was back in her own possession. The petrifying fear had had its head cut off. After her continuum workshop, her body's instinctual energy was fairly bursting out of her. A true healing had taken place and this healing came about because Deborah had the courage, like Dante, to enter into the Hell of her own dissociated life experience, descending with her own inner guide to meet her worst fears, one by one.

This was just one of a series of body-work sessions where Deborah, like the heroine in *The Woman Without Hands*, devoted time to her inner child, "Sorrowful." In the process, she grew back her own hands—her own ego agency and capacity for creative expression.

Deborah's healing continued during the "seven years" in the little house of her analysis, with body work augmenting our process along the way. Dreams continued to guide the process—very much like messengers

from another world. One important dream took us deep into Deborah's early despair and helped us to see how the psyche was helping to complete the narrative of her life story.

Here is the dream in her own language:

> I am at a house where other people are staying. An older woman there spoke of her contact with Native American people and a certain Bear Cult she was a part of. But the full story of this Bear Cult and of the tribal people who celebrated it was incomplete and unknown even to the adherents. There was a missing piece to the ritual.
>
> As this woman spoke, a young man in the group listened intently. Then he spoke up and said that his grandfather had given him this piece of information—part of the tribal ritual—that he was supposed to carry back. He even had a manual or folio of information about this missing part of the ritual. The woman was amazed! "Wow!" she said ... "This is so important!" The guy didn't really know what he had.
>
> He then pulled up the sleeve on his right arm and showed her his hand. A Bear's forearm and wrist had been grafted to his arm where his own hand had been severed—part of the ritual he'd been through. There was a great sadness to this. It wasn't a source of pride to him. He was kind of ashamed of it. He seemed like a disconnected person—withdrawn, depressed and somber.
>
> The young man grew tired and was going to sleep in my son's bedroom downstairs in this house. After he'd gone to bed, I noticed that there were drops of blood outside the door to his bathroom and I went in to check on him. I was really worried about his being suicidal. He was lonely and sad and isolated. But when I checked on him, he seemed to be fine and was sleeping peacefully.

Here is a dream that repeats the dismemberment theme of earlier dreams and of our fairy tale, but this time dismemberment is incorporated within a ritual context. Instead of silver hands, the young man has been through a ritual that involved grafting a bear's paw onto his severed arm—in other words he has become part bear. Deborah thought that the new ritual she had found might refer to her analysis and I was inclined to agree.

Deborah's first association to this dream was to the "Great Bear" dream she'd had shortly before entering therapy. She repeated that if it hadn't been for her contact with Native American spirituality she wouldn't have survived. Especially important to her was what she discovered about the Hopi and Navaho, the Kivas, the Earth-Mother rituals and the healing ceremonies.

While exploring the suicidal feelings of the boy, she began to cry—one of the first times she cried openly with me. She described the feelings that came up in her during the continuum workshop: the image of an opening,

a hole or a crevasse deep inside her. Somehow this connected to her earlier "Frida Kahlo" dream and to the blood she saw outside the boy's bathroom. In her tears she said this blood had been "released"—it just fell out of the body. "I sometimes think," she said, "that suicide must feel like that ... a release."

Conclusions

This dream is complicated, but there's a clear reference here to a missing part of Deborah's whole story that this young man, with his alienation and despair, is bringing "down" to the woman as though to complete a missing piece of the narrative that can now rejoin her life because she has a "ritual" (analysis) to contain it. Deborah had never talked so openly of her suicidal despair before we processed this dream.

As a personification of this suicidal despair in herself, this young man had somehow disappeared into the Bear Cult—the archetypal domain of the Great Mother where he remained unavailable to Deborah's ego, until now. He is even part bear and this makes him feel ashamed because he isn't quite human either. Perhaps this is emblematic of the way the archetypal world of the Great Bear cult saved Deborah's life from the despair she felt of being personally motherless. The archetypal world gave her a "spiritual" container when she was missing a personal one and although this meant a dismemberment, it held her Spirit "in the stars" or "in the earth" (earlier dream of the turtle mound) until the missing parts of her life story could descend and take up residence in "this world" once again.

Jung (1988: 441–3) described how when the Spirit cannot stay embodied, it escapes to the unconscious in which case the body is no longer a truly "living body." He also described how the unconscious was like the spectrum of light. Some portions of it could not be "seen" by the human eye because they were either "infrared" wavelengths of light or "ultraviolet" ones. Following this analogy further, Jung suggested that the infra-red end of the spectrum might represent the somatic unconscious—registered in the body—while the ultraviolet end would represent the "celestial" or spiritual unconscious registered as archetypal imagery in the mind.

Speculating further along Jung's line of thinking, we might imagine that whether an experience could be "seen" in the visible spectrum or not—and "where" it would appear on the spectrum, would depend on *whether it could be registered as experience by the immature ego.* Events that were so traumatic they could not be experienced would be encoded in somatic and simultaneously, celestial forms—as embodied affects without images, or images without affects. As the capacity for symbolic experience developed, dreams would then bring these two poles together and make experience of unbearable realities possible for the first time. Such dreams would be true integrative events. It is an accomplishment to dream them, to render the "unspeakable horror" into symbolic language.

This is one way to imagine what happened with Deborah in the container of her analysis. The cumulative trauma of her mother-wound, as well as the early near-death experience with ant poison, had been unthinkable—speechless horror. It was encoded in her body and it was also "elevated" into the celestial unconscious, encoded in the rarified archetypal imagery of her mind as the mother-bear that had ascended into the night sky and become a part of the constellations—becoming "starry" or "spiritualized." But a part of the story was missing—a dismembered part connected to her feelings—in the body. The young boy with the grafted bear/arm brought Deborah's suicidal despair "back" into consciousness to complete the ritual, giving the "celestial image" a "body" and completing the symbolic descent into her own body.

Without this missing piece of darkness and despair—its affects locked up in her constricted, tense body, its imagery locked up in the starry vault of the "celestial unconscious," the Bear Cult in the sky—she could not "remember" herself. She could not personalize and her soul was prevented from "indwelling." In order for this to happen, she had to grow strong enough to tolerate the affects associated with her worst experiences, because without a living body there was no place for that missing piece of Spirit to indwell. With the affect in the body and the image in her mind now experienced together, and witnessed in her therapy, her traumatic story could finally be told in its fullness and she was free. She had finally reached that place in her own process where she could "flower again from within, of self-blessing."

So we come back to the human soul—that vital formative principle of the personality that we have explored in all the chapters of this book. It now appears that the work of depth psychology promotes the soul's indwelling by reconnecting somatic (sensate) and mental (imagistic) aspects of experience and that the subjective sense of this connection is one of both *aliveness* and *meaning*. By enspiriting the body, the Spirit turns the body into a living body—an ensouled body. At the same time, by embodying the Spirit, the body helps ground the Spirit in time and space, making it real. Spirit and matter appear to seek each other through the psyche, and the place where they meet is the human soul.

As the Surrealist poet Paul Eluard is reported to have said, "Il y a un autre monde mais il est dans celui-ci" which translates as "There's another world, but it's in this one."

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 This term was used by Ellenberger (1970: 150, 314) to describe *a basic function of the unconscious*, i.e., its tendency to present itself to consciousness in the form of images that trend in the direction of archaic and typical (archetypal) motifs and images. He traces the term to Frederick Myers, Theodor Flournoy, and C.G. Jung, pointing out that this function of the unconscious has not received the attention it deserves.

Throughout this book, and consistent with Jung's understanding, we will emphasize the idea that a mytho-poetic story evolves in each individual's life, like flame around a candle's wick, providing a matrix for the soul's indwelling. This matrix represents an area *intermediate* between the worlds of spiritual and material reality. This mysterious *third* area is known in analytical psychology as *psychic reality* or *imaginal* reality. Jung proposed that mytho-poetic images had their roots in a *collective* layer of the unconscious, and he made clear that this deep stratum of the psyche mediates experience that is perceived as spiritual. So we cannot avoid spiritual experience in our otherwise material lives. We live our true lives "between the worlds." In our healthy selves, we are "citizens of two realms."

2 Unfortunately, Hillman's book devolves into a polemic against what he calls "trauma theories" and so his otherwise eloquent argument on behalf of the soul is undermined by a lack of clinical understanding of early trauma's devastating impact on the symbolic capacity that makes imaginative life possible.

3 An important example is Black Elk in the Lakota tradition (see Niehardt, 2004).

4 Jerome Bernstein (2005) describes such individuals as living in a "borderland" between rational and trans-rational reality.

5 Sandor Ferenczi (1931: 136) made a similar discovery and described such dreams as "wise-baby" dreams.

6 By daimonic, we mean a hybrid form of existence within the mytho-poetic world participating in both material and spiritual reality. In Plato's *Republic* (1961), daimons are described as intermediate beings halfway between mortal and immortal existence—halfway between god and man. Diotima explains to Socrates:

> They are the envoys and interpreters that ply between heaven and earth, flying upward with our worship and our prayers, and descending with the heavenly answers and commandments, and since they are between the two estates they weld both sides together and merge them into one great whole. They form the medium of the prophetic arts, of the priestly rites of sacrifice, initiation and incantation, of divination

and of sorcery, for the divine will not mingle directly with the human, and it is only through the mediation of the spirit world that man can have any intercourse, whether waking or sleeping, with the gods.

(p. 555)

7 Marcus Borg (2004) tells a remarkable story about this "forgetting"—a story that seems to support Keats' metaphor of "soul-making":

> A little girl, aged 3 was the firstborn and only child in her family, but now the mother was pregnant again and the little girl was very interested in this pregnancy and very excited to have a new brother or sister. Shortly after the parents brought her baby brother home from the hospital, the little girl approached her parents and made a request: She wanted some time alone with the new baby in his room with the door shut. She wanted to "talk with him." The parents were understandably perplexed by this request and knowing something about how older siblings can feel quite angry at being displaced by the birth of new brothers or sisters, they were cautious. However there didn't seem to be anything angry in their daughter's request and there was also an intercom in the baby's room so they would know immediately if anything untoward was going on.
>
> The moment finally arrived and the little girl was shown into the baby's room and the door closed, with both parents rushing nearby to the intercom to hear what this "conversation" might be. They heard their little girl's feet walking across the room; then there was a pause. And then they heard her say to her three day old brother; "tell me about God; I've almost forgotten."
>
> (Borg, 2004: 113)

1 TRAUMA AND LIFE-SAVING ENCOUNTERS WITH THE NUMINOUS

1 The German theologian Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) developed the use of this term in his book *The Idea of the Holy*. He writes: "For this purpose I adopt a word coined from the Latin numen. Omen has given us 'ominous', and there is no reason why from numen we should not similarly form a word 'numinous'" (Otto, 1950: 6–7). By numinous he meant a universal experience of a non-rational supersensual *feeling* that breaks through to human beings, filling them with both fascination and awe. To describe this he uses words like "shudder," "stupor," "astonishment," and "blank wonder." Otto felt that this eruption was the core of all mystical feeling and equivalent to the "void" of Buddhist mystics (Otto, 1917: 30).

2 These alternately angelic or demonic "powers," resident in what Henri Corbin (1977: ix) called the *mundus imaginalis*, have been the subject of several interesting books by theologian and biblical scholar Walter Wink (1984, 1998), for whom there is no question that these archetypal powers are the unseen spiritual realities that often dominate institutions as well as individuals. Wink finds these powers described in the New Testament. He cites especially Paul's letters in which the early apostle warns against an insidious network of invisible powers inimical to life. These powers are all the more dangerous because they can't be seen:

> we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities (archas), against the powers (exousias), against the rulers (kosmokratoras) of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts (pneumatika) of wickedness in the heavenly places.
>
> (Ephesians 6:12)

3 From Edward Edinger's taped lectures on the Old Testament, available from the C.G. Jung Institute, West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, California.
4 Rachel Naomi Remen (1996: xxvii) reminds us that hidden in all our personal stories is the one great human story about our true identity, who we are, why we are here, and what really sustains us. "The more we listen," she says, "the clearer that Story becomes."

2 LOSS AND RECOVERY OF THE SOUL-CHILD

1 This summary account is compiled from Rank's (2008: 25–6) summary (taken mostly from the story in Euripides), with embellishments from Graves (1960: 237–9).

3 DISSOCIATION AND THE DARK SIDE OF THE DEFENSIVE SYSTEM: DANTE'S ENCOUNTER WITH "DIS" IN THE INFERNO

1 I am by no means the first to notice this. See, for example, Taylor and Finley's (1997) *Images of the Journey in Dante's Divine Comedy* and Helen Luke's (2003) lovely essay *Dark Wood to White Rose.* However, neither of these authors approaches Dante's imagery as an out-picturing of the psyche's *defenses* as I do here.
2 Etymologically, "dis" means "split two ways," or "in twain" and thus is similar to the Greek "dia" as in "diabolic"—the opposite of "sym-bolic" (see the *Oxford English Dictionary*). There is also the sense of negation or "reverse," undo or spoil as in discount, discourage, disown, disable, and also to "strip of" or "expel from," as in disbar, disenfranchise, disempower. One of its main meanings is to render a whole thing into parts and therefore in Latin compounds "dis" was frequently the opposite of "com" or "con," as in concord vs. discord or coniunctio vs. disiunctio. This latter meaning alerts us to the fact that "dis" is also the root of discrimination, distinguish, discern, distance, and disidentify—very necessary and important capacities in psychological development. To be able to *dis*tance from toxic attachments, for example, is an important act of freedom—especially for the trauma survivor whose attachment patterns are often *dis*organized and destructive. Therefore, "Dis," by himself, is neither negative nor positive. But if he is *recruited by the defensive system* to split, divide, or encapsulate aspects of the inner world *in order to dismember experience after trauma,* then his activities become completely negative and lead to a pathological result.
3 The experience of not yet being fully "in life" describes a typical feature of what Jungian theory describes as "Puer" psychology, based upon the writings of M.L. von Franz (2000: 8). Its deeper significance is captured by Guntrip's (1969: 58ff.) description of the schizoid compromise.
4 The hypocampus is not the only part of the brain responsible for this higher integration of implicit memory (the whole brain is responsible for this integration) but, according to Daniel Siegel, it is the main one in early life (Siegel, 2007).

4 TRAUMA, TRANSFORMATION, AND TRANSCENDENCE: THE CASE OF MIKE

1 I would like to express my gratitude to the man whose analytic adventure is described in the following pages—not only for permitting me to write about his life (completely disguised) and our work together (minorly condensed), but for

helping me to understand "the inner world of trauma" at a depth that only his unique combination of intellect, feeling, and symbolic capacity could have illuminated. While I take full responsibility for the formulations which follow, many of the insights derived from his dreams and personal process were joint discoveries and belong as much to him as they do to me. To be more precise (and here I know he would agree with me) they belong to the transcendent dimension of the psyche itself, whose mysteries we conjured together.

2 See Chapter 7 in my book *The Inner World of Trauma* for an analysis of this story in light of the self-care system.

3 I had given him Edward Edinger's (1972) *Ego and Archetype.*

6 PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACHES TO THE INNER WORLD: APPLYING THEORY TO THE CASES SO FAR

1 An extreme version of this position is James Hillman's. In his book *Revisioning Psychology* (1975) he says we should begin with the personifying "factor" in the psyche (the soul or *anima*) who animates us from within, according to certain quasi-personal archetypes: "My so-called personality is a persona through which soul speaks.... Not I personify, but the anima personifies me, or soul makes herself through me" (1975: 51). Here is an equally one-sided complement to Faibairn's derivation of the inner world from object-relations; Hillman suggests we get our personality entirely from within. This constitutes a collapse of two worlds into one, but in the opposite direction.

2 See especially the case he presents on pages 18–24.

7 INNOCENCE, ITS LOSS, AND RECOVERY: REFLECTIONS ON ST. EXUPÉRY'S *THE LITTLE PRINCE*

1 Carol Savitz (1986: 339) discusses the concept of "re-illusionment" after the rupture of traumatic separation and the establishment of "a third transcendent realm ... forged out of the tension of opposites ... [leading to the] creation of internal missing psychic structure."

2 See chapter II in my earlier "Narcissism and the Search for Interiority," Diploma Thesis submitted to the C.G. Jung Training Center, New York. in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the analyst's diploma, May, 1979. C.G. Jung Institute, New York.

8 C.G. JUNG'S DIVIDED SELF: LEARNING TO LIVE "BETWEEN THE WORLDS"

1 The late psychoanalyst Elizabeth Lloyd Mayer (2007: 269) reports the following interesting story. Early in her career, she was in London at tea with Ursula Vaughan Williams, the widow of the famous English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. Several elderly musician friends were present and one of them began reminiscing about another afternoon salon held at the house of the Freuds, where they remembered the distinguished professor from Vienna and his daughter, Anna. Conversation turned to Freud's legendary disinclination for music and the question emerged as to why he always slipped away when the music started at these events. One of the women present remembered speaking with Freud about this and said: "He didn't like how music made him feel. We spoke about it once. He was free in his admiration but it transported him more than he enjoyed. I believe he preferred to be more controlled in his feeling."

NOTES

9 DIS-MEMBERMENT AND RE-MEMBERMENT: REFLECTIONS ON A CASE OF EMBODIED DREAM WORK IN LIGHT OF GRIMM'S FAIRYTALE, *THE WOMAN WITHOUT HANDS*

1 I have explored these terms in *The Inner World of Trauma*. See, for example, pp. 146 and 160.

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